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THE SPECTRE HUNTSMAN.

Page 153.

To Mr. W. Fletcher,
with the compliments of the author,
Charles Hardwick.

TRADITIONS, SUPERSTITIONS,

AND

FOLK-LORE,

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(CHIEFLY LANCASHIRE AND THE NORTH OF ENGLAND:)

Their affinity to others in widely-distributed localities;

THEIR

EASTERN ORIGIN AND MYTHICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

BY

CHARLES HARDWICK,

AUTHOR OF "HISTORY OF PRESTON AND ITS ENVIRONS," "MANUAL FOR PATRONS AND MEMBERS OF FRIENDLY SOCIETIES," ETC.

"Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."—*Matthew*, c. xi. v. 25.

"Every fiction that has ever laid strong hold of human belief is the mistaken image of some great *truth*, to which reason will direct its search, while half reason is content with laughing at the superstition, and unreason with disbelieving it."—*Rev. J. Martineau.*

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1872.

TO

HIS VERY DEAR AND EVER KIND FRIEND,

ELIZA COOK,

THIS WORK IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

AS A VERY HUMBLE BUT SINCERE TRIBUTE

TO HER POETIC GENIUS

AND

HER PRIVATE WORTH,

BY ITS AUTHOR,

CHARLES HARDWICK.

PREFACE.

Our nursery legends and popular superstitions are fast becoming matters of history, except in the more remote and secluded portions of the country. The age of the steam engine, and the electric battery, and the many other practical adaptations of the triumphs of physical science, is apparently not the one in which such "waifs and strays" from the mythical lore of the dim and distant Past are very likely to be much sought after or honoured. But now that the light of modern investigation, and especially that ray furnished by recent discoveries in philological science, has been directed towards their deeper and more hidden mysteries, profound philosophical historians have begun to discover that from this apparently desolate literary region much reliable knowledge may be extracted, leading to conclusions of the most interesting and important kind, with reference to the early history of our race. The labours of the brothers Grimm, Dr. Adalbert Kuhn, Professor Max Müller, the Rev. G. W. Cox, and others, have recently received considerable attention from philosophic enquirers into the origin and early development of the people from whom nearly all of the European, and some of the Asiatic, modern nationalities have sprung.

It is found that many of these imperfect, and sometimes grotesque, traditions, legends, and superstitions are, in reality, not the "despicable rubbish" which the "learned" have been in the habit of regarding them, but rather the crude ore, which, when skilfully

smelted down, yields, abundantly, pure metal well worthy of the literary hammer of the most profound student in general history, ethnology, or the phenomena attendant upon psychological development.

Professor Henry Morley, in the chapter on Ethnology, in his "English Writers," after noticing "how immediately and easily particular words, common in their application, would become available for common use," and "how often *images of the seen would become symbols of the unseen*," truly says, "The world about us is not simply mirrored, but *informed with a true soul*, by all the tongues that syllable man's knowledge and his wants. The subtlest harmonies of life and nature may lie hidden in the very letters of the alphabet."

The subject has been but recently introduced, in a thoroughly popular form, to the English reader. Dasent's "Popular Tales from the Norse," and occasional papers by local writers, intensified and extended the interest taken in this species of research. The publication, in 1863, by Mr. Walter K. Kelly, of his "Curiosities of Indo-European Tradition and Folk-Lore," however, may be said to have given a still greater impetus to popular investigation in this direction. This is largely to be attributed to the fact that he has summarised in a very pleasing manner much of the abstruse learning of the German philologists and mythologists to whom reference has already been made.

Whilst contemplating the publication of some "Supplementary Notes to the History of Preston and its Environs," the early chapters of which, of course, would necessarily deal with what is termed the "pre-historic period," Mr. Kelly's work came into my hands. I was induced to considerably enlarge my plan, in consequence of the value I immediately placed upon its contents, and of the suggestion in the following paragraph, which appears in its preface:

"In not a few instances I have been able to illustrate Dr. Kuhn's

principles by examples of the folk-lore of Great Britain and Ireland, and would gladly have done so more copiously had matter for the purpose been more accessible. My efforts in that direction have made me painfully aware how much we are behind the Germans, not only as to our insight into the meaning of such relics of the past, but also as to our industry in collecting them. The latter defect is indeed a natural consequence of the former, and it is to be hoped that our local archæologists will no longer be content to labour under either of them when once they have found what far-reaching knowledge may be extracted out of old wives' tales and notions. Only four years ago the editor of "Notes and Queries" spoke hypothetically (in the preface to "Choice Notes") of a time to come when the study of folk-lore (he was I believe the inventor of that very expressive and sterling word) should have risen from a pleasant pastime to the rank of a science. Already his anticipation has been realised, and henceforth every careful collector of a novel scrap of folk-lore, or of even a well-marked variety of an old type, may entertain a reasonable hope that he has in some degree subserved the purposes of the ethnologist and the philosophical historian."

In 1865-6 I published a series of the "Supplementary Notes" referred to, in the *Preston Guardian* newspaper. The general favour with which they were received, and the increasing interest I felt in the subject, induced me to continue my researches, with the view to the ultimate publication of the present volume. The original papers, as well as other essays afterwards published elsewhere, have not only been carefully revised, and, in some instances, rearranged, but the quantity of new matter added in each chapter is such as to render the work in every respect much more complete, and more worthy of being regarded as having, in some small degree, "subserved the purposes of the ethnologist and the philosophical historian." I would gladly persuade myself that I have, at least, rendered what many

regard as frivolous, and others as very abstruse and very "dry reading," interesting, attractive, and instructive to the general reader. If I succeed in this respect, my chief object will have been accomplished.

The various authorities relied upon or quoted are sufficiently indicated in the body of the work to render a catalogue of them here unnecessary. I may add, however, that the principal portions of the papers contributed by my friend, Mr. T. T. Wilkinson, F.R.A.S., to the "Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Historic Society," have since been incorporated with a portion of the collection of the late Mr. Jno. Harland, F.S.A., and published in a volume by F. Warne and Co., entitled "Lancashire Folk Lore."

74, Halston Street, Hulme,
Manchester, April, 1872.

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AND

FOLK-LORE.

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY INHABITANTS OF LANCASHIRE AND THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTIES, AND REMAINS OF THEIR MYTHOLOGY AND LOCAL NOMENCLATURE.

> And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
> Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.
>
> *Shakspere.*

On several occasions, when discussing obscure questions of early topography or ancient nomenclature, although readily acknowledging the value of all facts in connection with genuine etymological science, I have recommended great caution in the use of this powerful but somewhat capricious archæological ally. I yet retain a strong impression that this caution is still a necessary condition of truly scientific historical or antiquarian research. Consequently, several of the presumed etymologies in the present work are advanced with diffidence, and with a thorough conviction that some of them may prove to be illusive. The suggestion of a probability, however, is a very different thing to dogmatic assertion in such matters, a practice which cannot be too much condemned.

It is not very many years since the writer of the article "Language," in Knight's Cyclopædia, felt it his duty, in introducing the subject, to use the following strong expressions :—

"That division of grammar which is called etymology has been disgraced by such peurile trifling, and has been pursued with such an utter disregard to anything like scientific principles, as to create in the minds of many persons a suspicion against everything presented to their notice under the name of etymology. Such persons

have viewed etymology as nothing else than a dexterous play upon words, and have looked upon etymologists as little better than indifferent punsters. That the generality of writers upon this subject scarcely deserve any better appellation will hardly be denied by anyone who has studied etymology on true philological principles; and, if any doubt were entertained upon the point, it would only be necessary to refer to such works as Damm's 'Homeric Lexicon,' and Lennep's 'Etymology of the Greek Language,' which are full of such wild conjectures and such extravagant etymologies, that we cannot be surprised that a study which has produced such results should have been considered ridiculous and absurd."

The writer afterwards refers to the extent, and explains the nature of the progress which had been made during the twenty or thirty years previous to the date of his own paper. (1839). He justly attributes this progress to the "comparison of many languages with each other;" but he especially insists that "nothing has perhaps contributed to this improvement more than the discovery of Sanscrit (for as it has been justly observed, it may properly be called a discovery), which was found to bear such a striking resemblance both in its more important words and in its grammatical forms to the Latin and Greek, the Teutonic and Sclavonic languages, as to lead to the conclusion that all must have been derived from a common source."

An able writer in the *Saturday Review* truly describes the science of comparative philology as "the great discovery of modern scholarship, the discovery which more than any other unites distant ages and countries in one tie of brotherhood." Hence its great value to antiquarian students of every class.

Further investigation has fully demonstrated the truth of the views thus expressed. Not only is the affinity of the languages now admitted without dispute, but the consanguinity of the peoples and the identity of many of their popular traditions and superstitions have been demonstrated with scientific precision by such writers as the brothers Grimm, Dr. Kuhn, Dr. Roth, Max Müller, Farrer, Dasent, the Rev. G. W. Cox, and others, who have devoted special attention to the subject.

This common ancestry is sometimes styled Indo-European; but the phrase being open to objection, as including more than the precise facts justify, the term Aryan, or Arian, is now generally preferred. Some writers regard the Aryans as descendants of Japhet, and the Semitic tribes as the progeny of Shem. In the latter they include the Hebrews, the Phœnicians, the Arabs, and Ethiopians; and their

languages are radically distinct from those of the Aryan family. The country about the upper Oxus river, now mainly included in the dominions of the Khan of Bockhara, is generally agreed upon as the locality from whence the various members of the Aryan family originally migrated, some northward and westward over Europe, and others southward and eastward into India. The Kelts, the Teutons, the Greeks, Latins, Letts, and Sclaves are all European branches of this original stock. The Persians and the high caste Hindoos are the principal descendants of the southern and south-eastern migration. The chief elements of the British population at the present time are Keltic, represented by the Welsh, Irish, and Gaelic tribes, and the Teutonic, which includes Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, and Danish and Norse Scandinavians.

The non-Aryan races inhabiting Europe are not relatively very extensive or important. The chief are the Magyars and the Turks. There are besides some Tatars and Ugrians in Russia, a few Basques in the south-west of France and on the neighbouring Spanish frontier, and the Laps and Fins in Northern Europe.

The oldest writings extant in the Sanscrit branch of the Aryan tongue are termed the "Vedas." These works include a collection of hymns chanted or sung by the earlier south-eastern emigrants. It is believed this collection was formed about fourteen hundred years before the birth of Christ. According to ancient Hindoo authority, these hymns are coeval with creation. It is asserted that Brahma breathed them from his own mouth, or, in other words, that he milked them out from fire, air, and the sun. Some traditions state that they were scattered abroad or lost; and that a great sage, "Vyasa, the arranger," collected them together about 5,000 years ago. Vyasa, who was assisted in his labours by many other sages, taught the Vedic literature or religion to four distinct pupils. Payla learnt the Rig Veda, Vais'ampayana the Yajur Veda, Jaimini the Sama Veda, and Sumantu the Atharvan'a. The three first-mentioned are named collectively the sacred Trayi, or the Triad. These versions were afterwards much extended and commented upon by after sages.

The term Veda is derived from the Sanscrit root *vid*, which signifies to know. It implies the sum of all knowledge. By another etymology it is held to imply revealed knowledge, or that species of wisdom which contains within itself the evidence of its own truth. Rig is from the root *rich*, to laud, and implies that the Vedic knowledge is delivered in the form of hymns of praise.

Max Müller regards the Vedas as containing the key note of all

religion, natural as well as revealed. They exhibit a belief in God, a perception of the difference between good and evil, and a conviction that the Deity loveth the one and hateth the other. The degenerate religion of the modern Hindoos, and especially the worship of Krishnah, is described by a recent writer, as (in comparison with that of the Vedas) "a moral plague, the ravages of which are as appalling as they are astounding."

Walter Kelly says:—"The Sanscrit tongue, in which the Vedas are written, is the sacred language of India; that is to say, the oldest language, the one which was spoken, as the Hindoos believe, by the gods themselves, when gods and men were in frequent fellowship with each other, from the time when Yama descended from heaven to become the first of mortals. This ancient tongue may not be the very one which was spoken by the common ancestors of Hindoos and Europeans, but at least it is its nearest and purest derivative; nor is there any reason to believe that it is removed from it by more than a few degrees. Hence the supreme importance of the Sanscrit vocabulary and literature as a key to the languages and supernatural lore of ancient and modern Europe."

This discovery of the Sanscrit writings, and especially of the Vedas, has already exercised considerable influence upon etymological science. Before its introduction the main element in such inquiries consisted in the tracing *backwards* words corrupted or obscure in modern English to their original roots in Keltic, Teutonic, Greek, or Latin. The Sanscrit, however, being a *written* form of one of the earliest of the varieties of these cognate tongues, gives the etymological student the advantage of a flank or rear position, by means of which he may sometimes decipher the meaning of a doubtful term, by the inverse or *ascending* process, and thus gain some knowledge of its original meaning, perhaps long since lost by the descendants of those who first introduced it into the ancient language of Great Britain.*

It is by no means improbable that the idle historical legends related by Nennius and Geoffrey of Monmouth, respecting the arrival

* The *Pall Mall Gazette*, of January, 1867, contained a paragraph announcing the success which had attended the labours of M. Lejean, who had been sent by the French government "on a journey of scientific exploration to India and the Persian Gulf." M. Lejean, in a letter from Abushehr (Bendershehr), reports to the French Minister of Public Instruction, discoveries "of so extraordinary a nature," that the writer in the *Gazette* "scarcely likes to repeat them without further confirmation." Amongst other matters, he says:—"They extend from the oldest times to the Alexandrine period, and from the Arians to Buddhism. He speaks of having discovered ante-Sanscrit idioms *(langues paléo-ariennes)* 'still spoken between Kashmir

of Brutus and his Trojan followers in Britain, after the destruction of Priam's imperial city by the allied Greeks, may have just so much foundation in fact as might be furnished by a time-honoured tradition respecting the eastern home from which our remote ancestors originally migrated. The natives of Britain, on first coming in contact with the early merchants and traders from the Mediterranean shores, would doubtless hear something of the Iliad and the Enead, with the heroes of which they might innocently confound their own remote and vaguely conceived demideities or warlike human ancestry. Notwithstanding the just contempt in which these legends are held by modern historians, there still exists a kind of instinctive faith that a very remote tradition, however much it may have been overlaid and disfigured by relatively modern inventions, lies at the base of the main story. Emigrants from Iberia (situated between the Caspian and the Euxine Seas) are said to have settled in Greece (the Pelasgi), and in Tuscany and Spain (the Iberians). In Laurent's "Ancient Geography" is the following passage :—"In the Caucasus were found the Bruchi, the modern Burtani or Britani, a free tribe, rich in silver and gold." It is not improbable that the advent of emigrants of this tribe in England may underlie the legend of the Trojan Brutus and his followers. Eastern Albania too may have contributed, along with its neighbours, to the migratory hordes which passed to the west. The earliest name by which Britain was known to the Greeks and Romans is Albion. The Gaels of Scotland still speak of the island as Albin. In Merlin's famous prophecy, in Geoffrey of Monmouth's British History, the country is frequently named Albania. The universal tradition of the North German and Scandinavian tribes is that they came from the neighbourhood of the Caucasus to the North West of Europe. An early Odin is said to have introduced from the east the worship of the sun. Another at the head of the Æsir warriors imported the Runic alphabet. He is styled Mid Othin. Two other chiefs of this name figure in their legendary history.

Dr. Leigh held the opinion that the Brigantes, and especially the Setantii, or the Lancashire portion of the then population, were a mixed race, consisting of Kelts, Phœnicians, and Armenians. His

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and Afghanistan by the mountain tribes,' and he undertakes to prove 'that these languages have a more direct connection with the European languages than Sanscrit.'" Should this prove correct, a careful analysis of this speech or tongue may throw much light, either confirmative or otherwise, on many of the more recondite questions discussed in this work.

only reason for this conjecture appears to have been based on the fact that one of the chief rivers was named Belisama, which, he says, "in the Phœnician language, signifies the Moon or the Goddess of Heaven," and that Ribel, now the name of the same river, in the Armenian tongue signifies Heaven. Mr. Thornber says "Belisama means Queen of Heaven, and that the Romans paid divine honours to the Ribble under the title of Minerva Belisama." This conjecture apparently rests on the statement of Leigh, and the fact that the Roman temple at Ribchester was dedicated to Minerva. There appears to be, however, some error here respecting the sex of Bel. The Phœnician "Queen of Heaven," or "Queen of the Stars," was named Astroarche or Astarte. She is supposed by some to be identical with the Greek Juno, or Selene (the moon), by others she is regarded as the planet Venus. The Armenians were a branch of the Aryan family, and the Phœnicians, as I have before said, were of the Semitic stock.* Sanchuniathon, the ancient Phœnician historian, says that the Phœnicians worshipped the sun as "the only lord of heaven," under the name Beelsamen, which was equivalent to the Greek Zeus or the Latin Jupiter. Baal is formed from a root which signifies, and is literally equivalent to, lord or owner. A Maltese inscription "Malkereth Baal Tsor," is interpreted "King of the city, Lord of Tyre." In the Septuagint Baal is called Hercules; in the Phœnician language Orcul, light of all. One writer adds "Baal was Saturn; others have considered Baal to be the planet Jupiter. A supreme idol might easily be compared with those of other nations; hence arose this variety of opinions."

Amongst the many conjectures as to the origin of Stonehenge is one put forth by Godfrey Higgins, that it was built by Druids, "the priests of Oriental colonies, who emigrated from India." Mr. Davis, the author of "Celtic Researches," refers to a passage in Diodorus Siculus, in which it is stated, on the authority of Hecatæus, that a round temple existed in Britain dedicated to Apollo. Mr. Davis conjectures that Stonehenge is the edifice referred to.

The late Rev. John Williams, Archdeacon of Cardigan, in "Essays," published in 1858, strongly advocates the "Hyperborean theory," founded on the passage in Diodorus referred to. This view of the case implies that the Hyperboreans migrated mainly by water from

*Baldwin, however, in his recent work, "Prehistoric Nations," contends that the Phœnicians, as well as the ancient Egyptians and others, were descended from the old Cushite Arabs, and were therefore "Hamitic" rather than "Semitic" in their origin.

Central Asia, not long after the days of Noah; that they eventually occupied Great Britain, Spain, and Gaul, west of the Alps; that the Druid priests of Stonehenge were in sympathy and constant communication with those of Delphi; that they were civilised to a large extent, and were intimately related by blood with the Pelasgians of Ancient Greece.

The ancient name of this remarkable relic of the past is unfortunately lost, "Stonehenge" being evidently of Saxon origin, and in no way connected with its architects; the tale told by Nennius, about the murder of four hundred and sixty British nobles, through the treachery of Hengist, being a later romance invented to account for its Saxon name, Stanhengist. W. G. Palgrave, in his "Central and Eastern Arabia," describes the ruins of a "structure" which so nearly resembles the famous Wiltshire relic, that he calls it an "Arabian Stonehenge." He adds that the natives spoke of a similar ancient edifice as still existing in a part of the country which he did not visit.

Sir John Lubbock in his "Pre-historic Times," after alluding to the mythical character of the expedition to Ireland of Aurelius Ambrosius and Merlin, as related by Geoffrey of Monmouth, in search of the sacred materials employed in the erection of the megalithic edifice, says the larger stones are evidently similar in lithological character to the immense numbers yet strewn over Salisbury plain, and locally termed "Sarcens." He adds,—

"Stonehenge is generally considered to mean the hanging stones, as indeed was long ago suggested by Wace, an Anglo-Norman poet, who says:

Stanhengues ont mom Englois
Pieres pandues en Francois,

but it is surely more natural to derive the last syllable from the Anglo-Saxon word 'ing,' a field; as we have Keston, originally Kyst-staning, the field of stone coffins. What more natural than that a new race, finding this magnificent ruin, standing in solitary grandeur on Salisbury Plain, and able to learn nothing of its origin, should call it simply the *place of stones?* What more unnatural than that they should do so, if they knew the name of him in whose honour it was erected?"

After disposing of some other arguments in favour of a post-Roman date for the edifice, and expressing his conviction that this structure and its kindred one at Abury were used as temples for worship, Sir John Lubbock says,—

"Stonehenge may then I think be regarded as a monument of the

Bronze Age, though apparently it was not all erected at one time, the inner circle of small unwrought blue stones being probably older than the rest; as regards Abury, since the stones are all in their natural condition, while those of Stonehenge are roughly hewn, it seems reasonable to conclude that Abury is the older of the two, and belongs either to the close of the Stone Age, or to the commencement of that of Bronze."

Some writers regard the British or Keltic god Bel or Beil as not immediately the Belus or Baal of the Asiatic nations, but that it "designates *an exalted luminous deity*, peculiar to the Celts." This is the view of Jacob Grimm, and it is endorsed by W. K. Kelly. Another writer thinks that "the general character of Asiatic idolatry renders it likely that Baal meant originally the true lord of the universe, *and that his worship degenerated* into the worship of a powerful body in the material world."

The origin of the not yet entirely exploded superstition respecting the "divine right of kings" may have something to do with this primeval sun or fire worship. The Anglo-Saxon princes claimed descent from Odin or Woden, who, as will afterwards be shown, is evidently the Teutonic representative of the Aryan Indra, or the luminous or lightning god. A recent writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* says:—

"Every king of Egypt considered himself a direct descendant of the sun, and over his name was "Son of the Sun;" and as the sun was Phrè, so each king was called Phrè. As in the East at the present time, the Ottoman Emperor is termed by the Arabs, "Sooltan ebn Sooltan"—Emperor son of an Emperor. The king considered that his authority and the virtues and powers of his rule were direct emanations from the solar disc. This idea is beautifully set forth in a device from a tomb in the cemetery of El Emarna, where may be observed Ammophis, with his queen and their children, standing at a window or gallery of their palace, and are all engaged in throwing to their subjects, who are standing below with hands upraised to receive them, collars of distinction, vases, rings of money, symbols of life, and other blessings. These gifts the disc of the sun, which is represented above, is in the act of bestowing upon them. The king and his family were the only media of communication between the sun, the source of all blessings, and the people. This is significantly set forth by the rays which projected life into their mouths, and infused into their hearts courage, wisdom, and justice."

Frances Power Cobbe, in her "Cities of the Past," after visiting the ruins of Baalbec, quotes several beautiful passages from Du

Perron's *Zend Avesta*, illustrative of the purity of the sentiment of the earlier fire-worshippers. She says:—

"In what degree this high Persian faith (still existing in no ignoble type among the Parsees of India) was connected with the sun-worship of the gross Phœnician mythology, it is hard to conjecture. Perhaps there was no relation at all, and Baal (or Bel), the sun-god, never received in his impure fanes the homage of a true worshipper of Ormusd, the supremely wise Lord, of whom the *Zend Avesta* only tells us his light is hidden under all that shines. At least the faith of which Heliogabalus was hierophant had fallen as low as ever the religious sentiment of human nature may be debased. Yet does the 'golden star,' Zoroaster, throw a mysterious halo over the fire worship of East and West; that faith which blazed out in the Bactrian plains before the dawn of history, and which lights yet its memorial fires each midsummer eve in the vales of the Christian Scotland and Ireland."

She might have added, at least until very recently, the hills and dales of Lancashire and some other parts of England.

It is not improbable that before the corruption referred to took place, the Keltic emigrants to this country may have arrived at their western home, and so have introduced the worship of Baal or Bel in something like its pristine purity; and hence the distinction between the famous deity of Heliopolis and his presumed representative in Britain. A semi-subterranean temple, dedicated to the worship of Mithras, the Persian Sun or Apollo, was discovered in 1822 at Housesteads, Northumberland (Borcovicus), on the line of the great Roman wall. Mr. Hodgson describes it in detail in a contribution to the Arch. ÆL. O. S., vol. 1. This worship appears to have belonged to the debased form referred to. It evoked edicts from several Roman emperors decreeing its suppression, but without avail. This cruel and degrading superstition was, however, not introduced into the western portion of the "old world," until shortly before the advent of Christ. An altar, dedicated to this deity, found in the cave temple at Houseseads, was erected A.D. 253. Remains of Mithraic worship have been found at York and Chester, and other places, including Chesterholm (Vindolana), and Rutchester (Vindobala), on the line of the great Roman wall. This worship of Mithras is evidently but a corrupt descendant from the ancient Aryan adoration of Mithra, the god of daylight.

From these and other reasons, yet to be advanced, I am inclined to regard the introduction of the British god Bel or Beil as appertaining

to a much earlier epoch in our history than the advent of the Phœnician merchants, who, most probably, did visit the Belisama, Portus Setantiorum, and other harbours on the Lancashire and Cheshire coast, for trading purposes, but at a relatively much more recent period.

Mr. John Baldwin, in his "Pre-historic Nations," contends that the "Bronze Age in Western Europe was introduced by a foreign people of the Cushite race, culture, and religion, and that for a very long period it was controlled and directed by their influence." He further adds :—

"The first settlements of the Arabian Cushites in Spain and Northern Africa cannot have been later than 5,000 years before the Christian era. . . . Probably the Cushite race, religion, and civilization first went to the ancient Finnic people of Britain, Gaul, and the Scandinavian countries from Spain and Africa. The beginning of the Bronze Age in these countries was much older than the period of Tyre. The Tyrian establishments in those western countries seem to have been later than the Aryan immigration that created the Keltic peoples and languages ; and it may be that the Tyrians introduced the 'Age of Iron' not long after their arrival, for it was evidently much older than the time of the Romans."

Professor Nilsson refers the ancient bronze instruments, etc., to Phœnician influence, and describes some sculpture on two stones on a tumulus near Kivik, which, Mr. Baldwin observes, "even Sir John Lubbock admits, 'may fairly be said to have a Phœnician or Egyptian appearance.'"

Mr. Baldwin traces to Arabian Cushite colonies the very ancient civilization of Egypt, Caldea, and the southern portion of India, as well as Phœnicia and the western nations. Another stone, described by Professor Nilsson, is an obelisk symbolising Baal. Referring to this monument, Mr. Baldwin says :—

"The festival of Baal or Balder, celebrated on midsummer night in the upper part of Norway, reveals the Cushite race, for the midnight fire in presence of the midnight sun did not originate in that latitude. This festival of Baal was celebrated in the British Islands until recent times. Baal has given such names as Baltic, Great and Little Belt, Belteburga, Baleshangen, and the like." He asks, "What other people could have brought the worship of Baal to Western Europe in pre-historic times ? We see them in the stone circles, in the ruins at Abury and Stonehenge, in the festival of Baal that lingered until our own times ; and there is something for consideration in the fact that

Arabia has still the ruins of ancient structures precisely like Stonehenge. It is probable that the Arabians, or their representatives in Spain and North Africa, went northward and began the Age of Bronze more than 2,000 years before Gades [Cadiz] was built."

Mr. Baldwin draws a marked distinction between the modern Mahomedan Semitic population of Arabia and their great Cushite, Hamite, or Ethiopian predecessors. The former, he says, "are comparatively modern in Arabia," they have "appropriated the reputation of the old race," and have unduly occupied the chief attention of modern scholars.

Dr. Hooker, at the meeting of the British Association in 1868, described a race of men in a district of Eastern Bengal, who erect, at the present day, monuments similar to those termed, in Western Europe, Druidical. With his own eyes he had seen "dolmens" and "cromlechs" not six months old. He says that they call a stone by the same name as is given to it in the Keltic idioms of Wales and Brittany, though, he adds, little of the character of their language is yet known.

Sir John Lubbock, referring to the very ancient stone weapons found in Denmark, Switzerland, France, England, and other countries, termed *palæoliths*, says :—"Some implements of the same type have been found in Spain, in Assyria, and in India. The latter have been described by Mr. Bruce Foote ; they were found in the Madras and North Arcot districts, and are of quartzite, and in several cases were found by Messrs. Foote and King, *in situ*, at depths of from three to ten feet. The specimens figured will show how closely they resemble our European specimens, and it is interesting that in the words of Mr. Foote, 'the area, over which the lateritic formations were spread, has undergone, as already stated, great changes since their deposition. A great part of the formation has been removed by denudation, and deep valleys cut into them are now occupied by the alluvium of various rivers.'"

In several parts of Britain, and especially in Cumberland, altars have been found dedicated by Roman legionaries or their auxiliaries to a god named Belatucadrus. Mr. Thomas Wright (Celt, Roman, and Saxon, p. 292), after referring to a small one erected at Ellanborough by Julius Civilis, says :—

"Several others dedicated to this deity have been found at Netherby, Castlesteads, Burgh-on-the-sands, Bankshead, and other places. In some instances, as in an altar found at Drumburgh, the deity is addressed by the epithet, DEO SANCTO BELATVCADRO. In some altars he

is identified with Mars, as on one found at Plumpton Wall, dedicated DEO MARTI BELATVCADRI ET NVMINIB AUGG. Several attempts have been made to derive the name from Hebrew, Welsh, or Irish, and it has been hastily taken for granted that this god was identical with the Phœnician Baal. Altars to Belatucadrus have been found at Kirkby Thore, at Welp Castle, and at Brougham, in Westmorland. The one at Brougham was dedicated by a man named Andagus, which sounds like a Teutonic name."

Since the preceding paragraphs were written, I have seen in the Manchester Natural History Museum, a rude altar dedicated to this god, which, I am informed, was found some years ago at Ribchester, on the Ribble. As I had not previously seen or heard of it, it is not mentioned in my published "History of Preston and its Environs." The inscription is somewhat defaced, but the DEO MARTI BELATVCADRI is very distinct. It appears, like the one found at Plumpton Wall, to have been dedicated to this god, and to the gods of the emperor (NVMINIB AVGG), or, as some think, to the reigning emperor himself. The dedicator is Julius Augustalis, the prefect of some military corps, the name of which I cannot, at present, satisfactorily decipher.

The compounding of the name of *Baal* or *Bel* with other words is common, as in the ancient name of the Ribble—*Belisama*. This *Belatucadrus* appears to belong to this class, at least so far as *cadrus* is concerned, for at Risingham, in Northumberland, an altar was found dedicated to MOGONT CAD, which may perhaps mean, when written in full, in the nominative case, MOGONTIS CADRUS. Horsley imagined it probable that the CAD had reference to the *Gadeni*, a Caledonian tribe; but Mr. Wright regards this as very doubtful. The Welsh word *cad* means war, battle, tumult, etc. May not CADRUS, therefore, be a Keltic synonyme for Mars?

Other altars have been found dedicated to gods that may probably be traced to an Eastern origin. One found at Birrens, in Scotland, exhibits a winged deity, holding a spear in her right hand and a globe in her left. The dedication is to the goddess *Brigantia*. Mr. Wright says:—

"It was supposed this was the deity of the Brigantes, but I am not aware that this country was ever called *Brigantia*, and it is not probable the conqueror would worship the diety of a vanquished tribe. I feel more inclined to think the name was taken from *Brigantium*, in Switzerland, a town which occupied the site of the modern Bregentz. An altar found at Chester was dedicated DEAE NYMPHAE BRIG, which in this case would be 'To the Nymph Goddess of Brigantium.'"

Another ancient city styled Brigantium, now Briançon, was situated on an opposite spur of the Alps, in the country of the Taurini, now Piedmont. Ancient geographers speak of a tribe of Thracians, who were styled Briges. In Laurent's work, the river at present named the Barrow, in Ireland, is termed the Birgus. A people on the eastern coast of Ireland were called Brigantes, and the name Brigantina is still retained in the province of Gallicia, in Spain. Some authorities contend that the Gaedhels or Gaels, the Gaelic or Erse element of our population, originally entered Ireland and the south-west of England from Spain. From Ireland they spread, northward, to the western isles and highlands of Scotland, and westward, to the Isle of Man and the North of England and Wales. In one of the preserved extracts from the lost book of Drom Sneachta, supposed to have been written before the advent of St. Patrick, is what is termed "the Prime Story of Irruption and Migration." From this we learn that the ancient Milesian inhabitants themselves had traditions respecting their advent from Spain, which referred to the prior occupation of the country by two other branches of the Gaelic race, viz., the Firbolgs and the Tuatha dé Dannan. The story says the Milesians left Sythia for Egypt, but returned, and afterwards migrated to Spain by way of Greece. After a long residence in the peninsula, they built the city of Bragantia. About 1700 B.C., a colony of them landed at the mouth of the Slaney, in Wexford, under the command of the eight sons of Milesias or Galamah. In two battles they defeated their predecessors, and divided the country amongst themselves. The Cymri, another branch of the Keltic stock, on the contrary, entered Britain from Gaul, and were, eventually, to a considerable extent, driven upon the Gaelic tribes in the West of England and Wales by the pressure of their Teutonic successors. Professor H. Morley says that that portion of the population "in the North of England, who battled against the gradual progress of expulsion," was "known as Briganted, fighting thieves. Brigant is Welsh for thief and highlander." Brig and Brigant meaning top or summit, in modern Welsh, and Brigantwys the people of the summit, Brigantes has doubtless only originally meant the dwellers in the hilly country. The habits of the brigands of Greece, Spain, and Italy, of the present day, sufficiently account for its application to mountain hordes organised for the purposes of plunder and bloodshed.

Perhaps the Aryan mythology will supply a common source for all these local appellations. Walter K. Kelly ("Curiosities of Indo-

European Tradition") says:—"Agni, the god of fire (Latin, *ignis*), has for retainers the Bhrigus and the Angirases. They are his priests on earth whilst they dwell there in mortal form; and after death they are his friends and companions in heaven. They are also the companions of the clouds and storms"—in other words, personifications of some characteristics of clouds and storms. He afterwards speaks of "*Bhrigu, the father of a mythological family of that name.*" The root of the word means "*fulgent burning.*" The Bhrigus and a kindred mythical race, the Phlegyans, incurred the displeasure of the gods. The latter were condemned to the torments of Tartarus. Bhrigu, being an ancestor of the Brahmans, was more leniently treated. His father, Varuna, however, sent him "on a penitential tour to several hells, that he might see how the wicked are punished, and be warned by their fate."

The clouds and storms of the Alpine mountains and the Lancashire and Yorkshire hills would amply justify the appellation of the term Brigantium, or the country of the Brigantes, in the minds of Aryan emigrants, to both localities. The Bhrigus, according to Dr. Kuhn, were "brewers" of storms, or yielders of the heavenly soma, the drink of the gods; in other words, the distillers of rain water, which rendered the earth fruitful. The country of the Brigantes is the term given by the Roman historians to that part of England which lies north of the Humber and the Mersey, and includes the lesser tribes named the Volantii and the Setantii, or Sistuntii, which occupied the western or Lancashire coast, and perhaps that of Cumberland.

Another very common name on altars in the north of England is Vitires, Vetiris, or Veteres. Mr. Thomas Wright regards this as a "foreign deity," and thinks "it must have belonged to a national mythology." But he adds, "As the altars were dedicated apparently by people of widely different countries, they give us no assistance in appropriating this deity. The word has been supposed to be identical with Vithris, one of the names of the northern Odin, the Woden of the Germans." This name for Odin has evidently some relationship to the Vritra (or Ahi, the dragon) of the Hindoo Vedas.

Some altars have been found at Lancaster and in Cumberland, dedicated to Cocidius or Cocideus. According to the Ravenna manuscript, it is probable a temple to this god existed near the Roman Wall, of sufficient importance to name the place Fanococidi. The name of this god may probably be traced to an Aryan source. I can, however, at present, offer no better suggestion than that it may have some reference to the Stygian ferryman, which is of Aryan origin.

The river or arm of the sea over which the dead are ferried, by Charon, is variously named by the Greeks as the Styx, the Acheron, and the Cocytus. Perhaps the latter term may likewise furnish a clue to the derivation of the name Coccium of the Itineries, which I and others have placed at Walton, near Preston.* It has previously been suggested by others that this station may have been named after either the god Cocidius or the Emperor Cocceius Nerva. The assumption that it was derived from Cocytus or Cocidius would in no way vitiate the truthfulness of the usual derivation from the Keltic *coch gwi*, or red water, from the red rock in the Ribble, as it is easy to imagine such a description to have been given to the "river of death." That the station was named after Coccieus Nerva is improbable, as all the known evidence, including the site, coins, and the British foundation beneath the Roman remains, indicate it to have been one of Agricola's posts. He entered Lancashire in the year 79, and Nerva did not commence his reign until 96. He only reigned about two years.

A very large proportion of the names of mountains and streams in any part of Britain are corruptions, in a greater or lesser degree, of words belonging to the aboriginal or Keltic tongue. With the aid of the Welsh, the Gaellic, and the Irish, the meaning of many can be satisfactorily ascertained, such as the Darwen (Dwrgwen, white, or beautiful stream), Wyre (gwyr, pure, lively), Old Man (alt maen, high hill), Pennigent (Penygwyn, white head or summit), or, which I think better, Pen y gwynt, windy head or summit, from its exposed situation. Others are, however, by no means so satisfactorily explained on similar grounds. Mr. Davies in a very able contribution to the Philological Society's Transactions, on "The Races of Lancashire," with reference to the Ribble, says:—

"The name of this well known river has much perplexed antiquarian philologists. I can only venture to suggest that it may be compounded of rhe (active, fleet), and bala (a shooting out, a discharge, the outlet of a lake), and may refer to its rapid course as an estuary." With our knowledge, from Ptolemy, of the existence of a "Belisama Estuarium" on the Lancashire coast, in the second century, and which can be otherwise shown, on the best available evidence, to apply to the Ribble, the Rhi-bell, or River Bell, is a much more satisfactory derivation; and more especially so as a god *bel* or *beil* of the *beltain* fires is conceded (as I have previously shown) to the early Keltic inhabitants of Britain. The altar, recently found at Rib-

* History of Preston and its Environs, p. 36.

chester, dedicated to the British god Belatucadrus, proves, at least, that votaries of that deity dwelt in the Ribble valley, as well as in Cumberland, &c.

Godfrey Higgins, in his "Celtic Druids," speaks of Samhan or Saman as "one of the gods, the most revered in Ireland." He says:—"An annual solemnity was instituted to his honour, which is yet celebrated on the evening of the first day of November, which yet at this day is called the *Oidhche Samhna*, or the night of *Samhan*." He further informs us that he was "also called *Bal-Sab* or Lord of Death," and that "*Samhan* was also the sun, or rather the image of the sun," and adds:—

"These attributes of *Samhan* seem at first contradictory, but they are not unusual amongst the heathen gods. With the Greeks, Dionysos, the good Demiurge, is identified with Hades. In Egypt, Osiris was the lord of Death; with the Scandinavians, Odin, the god beneficent, was, at the same time, King of the infernal regions. This deity was above all the others whom we have named, but he was below the supreme being Baal. If Samhan were the sun, as we see he was, he answers to Mithra of the Persians, who was the middle link between Oromasdes and Arimanes—between the Creator and the Destroyer, and was called the *Preserver*."*

With the aid of the Hindoo Vedas, perhaps some light may be thrown on this subject, as well as upon the origin of the names of some other rivers in the neighbourhood, which have hitherto eluded satisfactory explanation.

The gods of the Vedas appear to have been, more or less, personifications of what were termed "the elements." The sun, the moon, the sky or firmament, the dawn and evening twilight, the sea, lightning, clouds, rain, wind, frost, fire, &c., and their attendant active phenomena, contributed mainly to the construction of their mythological edifice. Indra was god of the firmament, the earliest thunderer, the forerunner of Zeus, Jupiter and Thor; Agni was the god of fire, and Soma was the deity who brought down to earth the celestial liquor, the "drink of the gods," the amrita of the Vedas, the nectar of the Greeks. Soma was so designated because the "soma plant, which the Hindoos now identify with the *Asclepias acida* or *Sarcostemma viminale*," contained "a milky juice of a sweetish sub-acid flavour, which, being mixed with honey and other ingre-

* The Hindoo Trimûrtti or Triad, namely, Brahma, Vishn'u, and Siva, likewise represents the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer.

dients, yielded to the enraptured Aryans the first fermented liquor their race had ever known." All celestial or atmospheric phenomena were named from earthly objects. Clouds were called rocks and cows, and the mountain streams of the former and the milk of the latter were the liquid nourishers and fertilisers of the soil. The lightning god was believed to pierce the rock or the rain cloud, and so water the parched earth. Walter Kelly says :—

"The identity of the heavenly soma with the cloud-water, and the close connection in which fire and soma are brought in various Aryan legends, prove that the drink of the gods was conceived to be a product of the storm. It appears also that the earthly soma was boiled or brewed before it was fermented, whence it must have followed, as a matter of course, that its divine counterpart should be supposed to undergo the same process. Hence it is manifest that we cannot claim for any of the later ages the credit of having invented the metaphor involved in the common saying, 'It's brewing a storm.' In that phrase, as in many others, we only repeat the thoughts of our primeval ancestors."

Dr. Khun identifies the modern word *brew* with the *brajj* of the Rig Veda, which has reference to the roasting of barley for brewing purposes, and is intimately connected with the Bhrigus, beings who "brewed and lightened" the heavenly soma out of the stormy phenomena of the mountain regions. In the Welsh of the present day, *brygu* means to grow out, to overspread. One modern Welsh word, *brwysg*, means drunk, and another *brwys*, fertile, luxuriant. The double use of the term at the present time, is, therefore, in singular harmony with the hypothesis of Khun, and adds much to its probability. Kelly says :—"One of the synonyms of soma is *madhu*, which means a mixed drink; and this word is the *methu* of the Greeks, and the *mead* of our own Saxon, Norse, and Celto-British ancestors."

Near Rutchester, in Northumberland, the ancient Vindobala, is an excavation made in the solid rock, the cause or use of which is not with certainty known. It is 12 feet long, 4½ feet broad, and 2 feet deep, "and has a hole close to the bottom at one end." It is locally named the "Giant's Grave." It is not improbable, from remains discovered near it, that it has had some connection with a temple dedicated to the worship of Mithras. A manuscript by Sir David Smith, preserved in Alnwick Castle, referring to this singular excavation, says :—"The old peasants here have a tradition that the Romans made a beverage somewhat like beer of the bells of heather (heath),

and that this trough was used in the process of making such drink." Dr. Collingwood Bruce, commenting on the above, says:—"The opinion long prevailed in Northumberland that the *Picts* had the art of preparing an intoxicating liquor from heather-bells, and that the secret died with them."

The names of the gods underwent much change as time advanced, and the race was scattered. Bel became the *luminous deity* of some of the settlers in Britain; Soma became a higher deity in importance than Indra or Agni, and absorbed their attributes. In the Zend version the drink soma is spelled haoma. The hymns addressed to Soma, in a later age, are styled Sama Vedas. Hence it may easily be inferred the Belisama of Ptolemy is a Latinised form of the British words which indicated that the Ribble water was the "liquor of the gods" furnished by Bel and Sama for the fertilisation of the earth. The hoary rocky mountains of Pennygent, Ingleborough, and Pendle, and the storm-clouds that contended with lightning about their summits, furnish sufficiently characteristic natural phenomena to justify the appropriateness of the appellation. This deification of rivers was by no means an uncommon occurrence. Sir William Betham, in his "Gael and Cymbri," says, expressly, "the Celtæ were much addicted to the worship of fountains and rivers as divinities. They had a deity called Divona, or the river god." The Wharf, which springs not far from the source of the Ribble, received these honours from legionaries of Rome or some of their auxiliaries, who appear to have worshipped the stream as the water goddess "Verbeia." The Roman name appears to be merely a Latin form of the ancient British word of which the modern name Wharf is a corruption. The Lune, too, appears to have had similar honours conferred upon it, as is evidenced by an altar found at Skerton, near Lancaster, inscribed DEO JALONO. The word *Lune* was anciently written *Lone*, and the hundred is still named Lonsdale. Indeed, the personification of rivers is not yet extinct. We speak of "Old Father Thames" to this day.

The Ituna Estuarium of Ptolemy is universally assigned to the Solway, the chief river entering it being called the Eden at the present time. As *t* and *d* are convertible, and the Latin *i* was pronounced *e*, as on the continent now, Eduna most probably expresses to our ears the ancient sound, which is the exact counterpart of the modern one, the Latin terminal letter not entering into the question. Does the Vedic and Teutonic mythologies throw any light on the derivation of this name? Kelly says:—

"The cloud-maidens are known in the Vedas as *Apas* (waters), and

are styled brides of the gods (Dêvapatnis) and *Návyah*, *i. e.*, navigators of the celestial sea. Nearly related to them, but less divine, are the *Apsarases*; damsels whose habitat is between the earth and the sun. They are the houris of the Vedic paradise, destined to delight the souls of heroes. Their name means either 'the formless' or 'the water going,' and they appear to have been personifications of the manifold but ill-defined forms of the mists; but other natural phenomena may also have been represented under their image."

Kelly further informs us that these inferior cloud-maidens possessed raiment or "shirts of swan plumage," by means of which they "transformed themselves into water-fowl, especially swans." He adds that "the Persian peris, and the German swan-maidens, changed their forms in the same way, and by the same means." Indeed, they are "the originals" of these "swan-maidens," and are closely related to the Elves, Mahrs, and Valkyries, of the Teutonic mythology. The same writer further states that "Odin's Valkyries (riders in the wild hunt) had their swan-shirts, and the Norse goddess Freyja" (from whence our Friday), "had her falcon-shirt,* which she lent to Loki, when he went in quest of Thor's stolen hammer, and to rescue Idunn," (elsewhere spelled Idhunn) "the goddess of youth, from captivity among the frost giants. Thiassi, who kept her in custody, had an eagle shirt, and his fellow giant, Suttungr, had another, in which he pursued Odin."

These wild riders of the stormy sky, like their prototypes in the Vedas, personify or typify "rain senders." Mr. Kelly says, in the Teutonic form of the myth, the manes of their horses "dropped dew upon the earth, filled the drinking horns for the gods and the warriors in Odin's hall; and like them, white maidens, elves, and witches offer full goblets and horns to thankless mortals, who usually run away with the beaker after spilling its contents on the ground."

It is a somewhat singular circumstance that the most celebrated relict of this old pagan superstition, or myth, is preserved at Eden-hall, on the bank of the very river to which I am referring. Tradition says the goblet was secured, in the orthodox way, by an ancestor of the Musgraves, or one of his retainers, ages ago. Sir Walter Scott has rendered the story immortal. He makes the following distich salute the ears of the bold plunderer, as he hurriedly decamps from the fairy revel:—

> If this glass do break or fall,
> Farewell the luck of Edenhall.

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* The falcon, as well as the eagle, was a "firebringer or lightning-bird."

The "Luck of Edenhall," as the very ancient glass vessel is styled, is believed to be of Venetian manufacture, and dates, probably, from the century preceding the Norman conquest.

The Rev. G. W. Cox, in his valuable work on the "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," ranks this cup amongst the numerous phallic symbols. Referring to this subject, he says:—"We have seen the myth starting from its crude and undisguised form, assume the more harmless shape of goblets or horns of plenty and fertility; of rings and crosses, of rods and spears, of mirrors and lamps. It has brought before us the mysterious ships endowed with the powers of thought and speech, beautiful cups in which the wearied sun sinks to rest, the staff of wealth and plenty with which Hermes guides the cattle of Helios across the blue pastures of heaven, the cup of Dêmêtêr into which the ripe fruit casts itself by an irresistible impulse. We have seen the symbols assume the character of talismanic tests, by which the refreshing draught is dashed from the lips of the guilty; and, finally, in the exquisite legend of the Sangreal the symbols have become a sacred thing, only the pure in heart may see and touch."

The goddess of youth (Idunn), with her attendant swans and waterfowl, is not an inapt personification of the lovely Eden, in its lower course; while the wild moors and crags, where the eagles nestled, and amongst which its many tributary streamlets spring, aptly enough answers to the homes of the frost giants, who, in severe winters, held captive the congealed waters.

It may be thought that this, being a Teutonic etymology, is not so satisfactory as if it were Keltic. But its pertinence is corroborated by the fact that, in the Welsh of the present day, *edn* means fowl or bird, *edyn* winged one, and *ednyw* spirit, essence.

Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his work on "First Principles," when treating of "Laws in General," argues elaborately on the order in which the sense of law, or a recognition of "that constant course of procedure" which the term implies, was gradually developed in the human intellect. After showing that there are several derivative principles, some earlier arrived at than others from the relative frequency of the occurring phenomena and their immediate influence upon, or of "personal concern" to, the aboriginal savage, he has some observations very pertinent to the present question. He says:—"The solidification of water at a low temperature is a phenomenon that is simple, concrete, and of much personal concern. But it is neither so frequent as those which we saw are earliest generalized, nor is the *presence of*

the antecedent so uniformly conspicuous. Though in all but tropical climates, mid-winter displays the relation between cold and freezing with tolerable constancy; yet, during the spring and autumn, the occasional appearance of ice in the mornings has not very manifest connection with the coldness of the weather. Sensation being so inaccurate a measure, it is not possible for the savage to experience the definite relation between a temperature of 32° and the congealing of water; and hence the long-continued conception of *personal* agency. Similarly, but still more clearly, with the winds, the absence of regularity, and the inconspicuousness of the antecedents, allowing the mythological explanation to survive for a great period."

The names of the Severn and the Dee, and some other rivers or estuaries, will admit of similar interpretation from similar sources. Mr. Kelly says:—"The collective appellation of the Vedic gods is Dêvas, and this name has passed into most of the Indo-European languages; for corresponding to the Sanscrit *dêva* is the Latin *deus*, Greek *theós*, Lithunian *dêwas*, Lettish *dews*, Old Prussian *deiws*, Irish *dia*, Welsh *duw*, Cornish *duy*. Amongst the German races the word *dêva* survives only in the Norse plural *tivar*, gods; and amongst those of the Sclave stock the Servians alone preserve a trace of it in the word *diw*, giant. The daêvas of the Medes and Persians were in early times degraded from the rank of gods to that of demons by a religious revolution, just as the heathen gods of the Germans were declared by the Christian missionaries to be devils; and the modern Persian *div*, and Armenian *dev*, mean an evil spirit. Dêvá is derived from *div*, heaven (properly 'the shining'), and means the heavenly being."

This appears to be a satisfactory and conclusive answer to a very pertinent question put by George Borrow in the last chapter of his work on "Wild Wales." He says:—"How is it that the Sanscrit *devila* stands for what is wise and virtuous, and the English devil for all that is desperate and wicked?" A similar answer is given to this question by the fate which the Teutonic gods of Western Europe underwent on the final triumph of Christianity. Dasent says:—"They were cast down from honour, but not from power. They lost their genial kindly influence as the protectors of men and the origin of all things good; but their existence was tolerated; they became powerful for ill, and degenerated into malignant demons."

In the Hindoo mythology, it appears revolutions took place at a very early date. In the early Vedic hymns Dêva is "addressed as Dyanish pitâ, *i.e.*, Heaven Father, and his wife is Mata Prithivi,

Mother Earth. He is the Zeus Pater of the Greeks, the Jupiter of the Romans, the German Tius, and the Norse Tyr. Dyanish pitâ was the god of the blue firmament, but even in the Vedic times his grandeur was considerably on the wane. Indra, the new lord of the firmament, had left him little more than a titular sovereignty in his own domain, while Varuna, another heavenly monarch, who was still in the plenitude of his power, commanded more respect than the *roi fainéant*, his neighbour. The all-covering Varuna,* the Uranos of the Greeks, was lord of the celestial sea and of the realm of light above it, that highest heaven in which the Fathers dwelt with their King Yama. After the southern branch of the Aryans had entered India, Varuna was brought down from the upper regions, to be thenceforth the god of the earthly sea, which had then for the first time become known to his votaries."

May not this Varun be possibly the true root of the name Severn? Etymologists are not at all agreed as to its derivation. Some say it was anciently called Hafren, and that this term is identical with Severn, the latter being merely a corruption of the former. This is the prevalent opinion. The Severn, indeed, yet retains the name Hafren, from its source to Llanidloes. Its principal upper tributary which enters it a little below Welshpool is called the Vyrnwy. May not this be the true Welsh root of the word? If such be the case, there is nothing improbable in the conjecture that Hafren is a Keltic corruption of the Sanscrit Varun, especially as the *f* and *v* are readily "convertible." The Se may be a prefix, of which more anon.†

Geoffrey of Monmouth, in his "British History," states that King Locrin divorced his queen Guendolœna, and married a beautiful captive named Estrildis. On the death of the king, the divorced queen commanded "Estrildis and her daughter Sabre to be thrown into the river now called the Severn, and published an edict through all Britain that the river should bear the damsel's name, hoping by this to perpetuate her memory, and by that the infamy of her husband.

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* "Varuna and the demon Vitri both derive their names from var, vri, to cover, to enfold."

†Since the above was written, the Rev. G. W. Cox's "Mythology of the Aryan Nations" has been published. At page 78, vol. 2, speaking of the youth of Paris, the seducer of Helen, he says:—"In his early life he has the love of Oinônê, the child of the river god Kebrên, and thus a being akin to the bright maidens who, like Athênê and Aphroditê, are born from the waters." In a note he adds "that this name Kebrên is probably the same as Severn, the intermediate forms leave little room for doubting."

So that to this day the river is called in the British tongue Sabren, which by the corruption of the name is, in another language, Sabrina."

Milton, speaking of Sabrina as the goddess of the river, styles her "the daughter of Locrine, that had the sceptre from his father Brute." As the mythical or rather non-historical character of Brute and his progeny is now almost universally conceded, it is not improbable that the river named the maiden (if she ever existed in the flesh) rather than that her immersion changed its designation. Sabrina, or Savrina (for the *b* and *v* are convertible), may therefore but be the Latinized form of the old Welsh Hafren and the Sanscrit Varuna, with the prefix *se* added thereto.

The Dee is described as the Seteia Æstuariun by Ptolemy. The Roman city Deva (Chester) was situated on its banks. The *se* is generally regarded as a prefix in this case, and it may likewise be so in the word Severn. *D* and *t* being convertible, the names of the river and city evidently spring from one root. The Rev. John Whitaker, the historian of Manchester, in interpreting the term Se-tan-tiu, says it may mean "the inferior or southerly country of water, and express the particular position of Lancashire with respect to the Volantii and the sea."*

The Se, in these cases, may have a somewhat similar import, or it may have reference to the Vedic great serpent Sesha, concerning which there is a curious story in the Hindoo poems. The Devas had been at war with their enemies, the Asuras, and, being thirsty with the work (or the country needing rain), a truce was agreed upon, and

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*Since the above was written, I have seen, in Captain Speke's "Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile," the map of Eastern Equatorial Africa, which accompanied a paper, published in the third volume of "Asiatic Researches, in 1801." Speke, referring to this paper, says:—"It was written by Lieutenant Wilford, from the 'Purans' of the ancient Hindus. . . . It is remarkable that the Hindus have christened the source of the Nile *Amara*, which is the name of a country at the north-east corner of the Victoria N'yanza. This, I think, shows clearly, that the ancient Hindus must have had some kind of communication with both the northern and southern ends of the Victoria N'yanza." I find on this map, on the west side of the inland sea styled "Lake of Amara or of the Gods," a range of hills named "*Sitanta Mts*." They are in close contiguity to the "*Soma Giri*" or "Mountains of the Moon," and seem to be a lower or inferior branch of that range, bordering upon the waters of the great lake. This appears to be a further confirmation of the high probability which exists that some of the very ancient local nomenclature of Britain and Western Europe is of Eastern origin. Ptolemy speaks not only of a people inhabiting the district of which Lancashire forms a part, which he names the *Setantii*, but of a harbour on the coast, the *Portus Setantiorum*, which I and others have fixed at the Wyre. [See "History of Preston and its Environs." p. 36.]

both sides joined their efforts "in churning the ocean to procure amrita" (or soma) "the drink of immortality. They took Mount Mandara for a churning stick, and wrapping the great serpent Sesha round it for a rope, they made the mountain spin round to and fro, the Devas pulling at the serpent's tail, and the Asuras at its head. Mount Mandara was more anciently written Manthara, and Manthara is the Sanscrit name of the churning stick which is used by every dairy in India."* The purely figurative character of this is easily seen. It is but another form of expressing the fertilization of the earth by means of the rain which is engendered by the "strife of the elements." The churning stick and cord are but another form of the Hindoo pramantha, or fire churn, "or chark," by which the sacred or "need-fire" was produced amongst the Greeks and Romans, as well as the Keltæ and other Aryan tribes, before the discovery of the use of flint and steel. The "chark" represented the power of the sun, and it is not impossible our remote Eastern ancestors were aware that the sun really does, in a sense, "churn" or "brew" the ocean water, and distribute its vapours over mountain and plain, and by this means convert even an otherwise barren wilderness into a fertile garden, making it literally "blossom like the rose."

That this superstition has not yet become extinct in India is attested by the following paragraph, which appeared in the newspapers in the year 1869:—"The inhabitants of Burmah have an idea that pulling at a rope will produce rain. Two parties tug against each other. One is a raining party, the other is a fair weather party. By previous arrangement the rain party are allowed to be victorious. On the occasion of the late continued drought this proceeding was attended with the happiest results.†

Geoffrey of Monmouth says that an "invading king of the Huns, named Humber, was defeated by Locrin on the banks of that river, and drowned in its flood, on account of which it has since borne his name." This, of course, is merely idle romance. Some writers con-

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*The second "Avatâra" of Vishn'u was in the form of a tortoise, when Vishn'u placed himself under the mountain Mandara, while the gods and demons churned the Milky Sea for ambrosia. This incarnation is called the *Kurma*. This churning appears to have produced other miraculous results. Amongst the "gifts" of the ocean on this auspicious occasion, two especially fell to the share of Vishn'u himself, namely, a miraculous jewel, named *Kaustubha*, and S'rî, the goddess of Beauty and Prosperity. The Venus of the Greeks was said to have been produced from the foam of the sea, in the neighbourhood of the island *Cythera*, hence one of the numerous appellations of the goddess—*Cytherea*.

tend that the name was originally Chumber, that Northumberland means North Cumri-land, of which the present Cumberland is a relic. It is not improbable that the Mersey derived its name from Mercia, or the territory from the boundary river. It, in conjunction with the Humber, divided Northumbria from Mercia during the heptarchy. The Mersey is still called the Cheshire Waters by some of the inhabitants on the south-west of Manchester.

It is somewhat singular that no Roman writer or Itinerary mentions the Humber. Ptolemy speaks of a river Abus, which is generally identified with that stream, but this helps us not to the etymology of the modern name. It is not altogether improbable, however, that the Aryan mythology may throw some light upon the ancient appellations. We are informed by Max Müller that, previous to the dispersion of the Aryan tribes, the Rhibus were called Arbhus, and that this latter term is identical with the Greek Orpheus. From this root likewise is derived the German Alb or Alp; plural *Elbe* or Elfen; English Elf, with its plural Elves. In the modern Welsh the word *elod* means intelligence, spirit, *elaeth* spiritual being, and *elford* both demon and intellectual existence. The Rev. G. W. Cox says that Alpheios, the mythic huntsman, "is the child of the waters. . . . He is, in short, the Elf, or water sprite, whose birth-place is the Elbe, or flowing stream." If the name of the German river *Elbe* (Albis) be derived from this source, the probability is heightened that the Abus of Ptolemy may have intimate relationship to the Aryan Arbhus, or Ribhus. These mystic beings were followers, like the Bhrigus and the Maruts, of Agni and Indra, "personifications of fire and firmament." Kelly says:—"The element of the Ribhus is rather that of the sunbeams or the lightning, though they too rule the winds, and sing, like the Maruts, the loud song of the storm.* Their name means the 'artificers,' and not even the divine workman of Olympus was more skilled than they in all kinds of handicraft. The armour and weapons of the gods, the chariots of the Asvins (deities of the dawn), the thunderbolt and the lightning steed of Indra, were of their workmanship. They made their old decrepid parents young and supple-jointed again. But the feat for which they were most renowned is the revival of the slaughtered cow on which the gods had feasted. Out of the hide alone these wonder-working Ribhus reproduced the perfect living animal; and this they did not once, but again and again. *In other words, out of a small portion of the imperishable cloud*

* The modern Welsh word *aban* signifies din, tumult, uproar.

that had melted away in rain and seemed destroyed, they reproduced its whole form and substance."

Similar feats were ascribed to the Northern thunder-god, Thor, whose practice it was to kill the two buck goats that drew his car, cook them for supper, and bring them to life again next morning by touching them with his hammer.

Kelly further adds that in "the gloomy season of the winter solstice the Rhibus *sleep for twelve days in the house of the sun-god Savitar;* then they *wake up and prepare the earth to clothe itself anew with vegetation, and the* FROZEN WATERS TO FLOW *again.*"

The tributaries of the Humber are remarkable on account of their liabilities to sudden floods; and their constant recurrence, after long periods of drought, would suggest to a primæval people the interference of celestial beings which possessed the attributes assigned to these Arbhus or Ribhus. Referring to the Greek form of this myth, Kelly says :—

"We see how the cruder idea of the Ribhus sweeping trees and rocks in wild dance before them by the force of their stormy song grew under the beautifying touch of the Hellenic imagination into the legend of that master of the lyre whose magic tones made *torrents pause and listen, rocks and trees descend with delight from their mountain beds,* and moved even Pluto's unrelenting heart to pity."

The estuary on the opposite coast of Britain to the Severn, now known as the Wash, is called by Ptolemy, Metaris. May not this name have had, originally, some connection with Varuna's friend Mithra? Kelly says :—

"When the sun was still a wheel, a store of gold, a swan or a flamingo, an eagle, falcon, horse, and many other things, it was also the eye of Varuna; just as amongst the Anglo-Saxons and other Germans it was held to be the eye of Woden. Varuna and Mithra (the friend), *the god of daylight,* used to sit together at morning on a golden throne, and journey at even in a brazen car."

The sun, at the dawn at least, gilded the waves of the eastern estuary, and shed its ruddier glow at evening on the western or Severn sea. Under any interpretation, the coincidence of so many names and half-hidden characteristics, to say the least, is very remarkable.

There is nothing extravagant in this attempt to show that the terms thus applied conveyed both a literal, or earthly, as well as a figurative, or celestial, meaning. All mythology is fashioned out of such materials. Primitive languages are limited in the number of

their words, and, of necessity, are highly figurative. The tongues of all the North American Indians, as well as those of the tribes of Aryan and Semitic origin, markedly exhibit this peculiarity. Farrar, in his essay on the "Origin of Language," says :—

"To call things which we have never seen before by the name of that which most nearly resembles them is a practice of every-day life. That children at first call all men 'father' and all women 'mother' is an observation as old as Aristotle. The Romans gave the name of Lucanian *ox* to the elephant, and *camelopardus* to the giraffe, just as the New Zealanders are stated to have called horses *large dogs*. The astonished Caffers gave the name of *cloud* to the first parasol which they had seen; and similar instances might be adduced almost indefinitely. They prove that it is an instinct, if it be not a necessity, to borrow for the unknown the names already used for things known."

CHAPTER II.

FIRE OR SUN WORSHIP AND ITS ATTENDANT SUPERSTITIONS.

Most glorious orb! thou wert a worship, ere
The mystery of thy making was reveal'd!
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
Which gladden'd, on their mountain tops, the hearts
Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they pour'd
Themselves in orisons! Thou material God!
And representative of the Unknown—
Who chose thee for his shadow!

Byron.

Let us meditate on the adorable light of the divine ruler,
(Savitri, the sun); may it guide our intellects.

Vedic Hymn.

In his own image the Creator made,
His own pure sunbeam quicken'd, thee, O man!
Thou breathing dial! Since thy day began
The present hour was ever markt with shade.

W. Savage Landor.

I HAVE said that some remains of the fire worship of Bel or Beil, until very recently, might be found in Lancashire and the North of England, as well as at present in Scotland and Ireland. Indeed, I am inclined to think certain English customs of the peasantry, at the present day, may, with perfect truthfulness, be referred to this source, although the original objects of the ceremonies may have been, either wholly or in part, obliterated by time, or obscured by the action of more recent rites and traditional observances.

Amongst these may be instanced a superstition prevalent in the North of England and many other places, that a funeral procession, when arrived at the churchyard, must move in the sun's course; that is, from east to west; otherwise evil resulted to the spirit of the departed. This sentiment is not confined to religious ceremonies, but is respected when passing the bottle in convivial assemblies; and in several other matters of ordinary every-day-life. The fact that Brand, and most of the earlier writers after the Reformation, speak of these superstitions as "Popish," in no way invalidates the assignment to them of an Aryan origin. As early as the eleventh century,

in the reign of Canute the Great, we find laws strictly prohibiting the people from worshipping, or venerating, "the sun, moon, sacred groves and woods, and hallowed hills and fountains." Decrees were again and again pronounced in vain against many of these practices by the ecclesiastical authorities. In the canons of the Northumberland clergy, quoted by Wilkins and Hallam, we read as follows :—

"If a king's thane deny this" *(the practice of heathen superstition)*, let twelve be appointed for him, and let him take twelve of his kindred (or equals, *maga)*, and twelve British strangers; and if he fail, then let him pay for his breach of law, twelve half-marcs: if a landowner (or lesser thane) deny the charge, let as many of his equals and as many strangers be taken as for a royal thane; and if he fail, let him pay six half-marcs: If a ceorl deny it, let as many of his equals and as many strangers be taken for him as for the others; and if he fail, let him pay twelve oræ for his breach of law."

This demonstrates that all classes, whatever their rank, found it difficult to shake off the superstitions of their forefathers. Some of them became amalgamated with more modern festive ceremonies, and were eventually intermingled with the formulæ of the Christian worship itself. Sir Jno. Lubbock, in his recent work, "The Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man," endorses this view. He says: "When man, either by natural progress, or the influence of a more advanced race, rises to the conception of a higher religion, *he still retains his old beliefs, which long linger on, side by side with*, and yet in utter opposition to, the higher creed. The new and more powerful spirit is an addition to the old Pantheon, and diminishes the importance of the older deities; gradually, the worship of the latter sinks in the social scale, and becomes confined to the ignorant and the young. Thus a belief in witchcraft still flourishes among our agricultural labourers and the lowest classes in our great cities, and the deities of our ancestors survive in the nursery tales of our children. We must, therefore, expect to find in each race, traces—nay, more than traces—of lower religions."

In the Irish Glossary of Cormac, Archbishop of Cashel, written in the beginning of the tenth century, the author says, in his time "four great fires were lighted up on the four great festivals of the Druids, viz., in February, May, August, and November." General Valancey says the Irish have discontinued their November fires and substituted candles; while the Welsh, though they retain the fire, "can give no reason for the illumination." All Saints' Day is on the first of November, and its vigil is termed Allhalloween, or Nutcrack

night. These festivals had all reference to the seasons, and their influence on the fruitfulness of the earth. Brand says "it is customary on this night with young people in the north of England to dive for apples, or catch at them, when stuck upon one end of a kind of hanging beam, at the other extremity of which is fixed a lighted candle, and that with their mouths only, their hands being tied behind their backs." Robert Burns tells us that Halloween is thought to be a "night when witches, devils, and other mischief making beings, are all abroad on their baneful midnight errands; particularly those ærial people, the fairies, are said on that night to hold a grand anniversary." Scotch girls, on this evening, pull, blindfolded, cabbage stalks, in order to divine the size and figure of their future husbands. Nuts are roasted or flung into the fire for a similar purpose both in Scotland and England. Gay describes the latter ceremony as follows:—

> Two hazel nuts I threw into the flame,
> And to each nut I gave a sweetheart's name;
> This with the *loudest bounce* me sore amazed,
> That in a *flame of brightest colour* blazed;
> *As blazed the nut so may thy passion grow,*
> For 'twas thy nut that did so brightly glow!

We possess some interesting accounts of these gatherings in various parts of Scotland during the latter portion of the last century. In Perthshire, heath, broom, and dressings of flax were tied to poles, lighted, and carried round the villages and fields. One minister says the people "set up bonfires in every village. When the bonfire is consumed, the ashes are carefully collected into the form of a circle. There is a stone put in near the circumference, for every person of the several families interested in the bonfire; and whatever stone is removed out of its place or injured before the next morning, the person represented by that stone is devoted, or *fey*, and is supposed not to live twelve months from that day. The people received the consecrated fire from the Druid priests next morning, the virtues of which were supposed to continue a year." A similar authority says, "the custom of making a fire in the fields, baking a consecrated cake, &c., on the 1st of May is not yet quite worn out."

In Derbyshire these fires were called *Tindles*, and were kindled at the close of the last century. In some localities the ceremony is called a *Tinley*. Sir William Dugdale says, "On All-Hallow Even the master of the family anciently used to carry a bunch of straw, fired, about his corne, saying—

> "Fire and red low
> Light on my *teen low*."

In Lancashire they are called *tandles* and *teanlas*. In Ireland May-day eve is called *neen na Bealtina*, the eve of Bael fires. The practice of divination by the roasting of nuts is yet common in Lancashire. The hollow cinder, too, which leaps from a coal fire, is supposed to augur wealth or death to the person against whom it strikes, in proportion as its shape nearest resembles a purse or a coffin.

Mr. Thornber, the historian of Blackpool, and Mr. T. T. Wilkinson, of Burnley, author of a series of valuable papers on Lancashire superstitions published in the "Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Historic Society," have furnished some curious information of a local character with reference to this ancient fire-worship. The latter says:—"Such fires are still lighted in Lancashire, on Hallowe'en, under the names of Beltains or Teanleas; and even the *cakes* which the Jews are said to have made in honour of the Queen of Heaven, are yet to be found at this season amongst the inhabitants of the banks of the Ribble. . . . Both the fires and cakes, however, are now connected with superstitious notions respecting purgatory, &c., but their origin and perpetuation will scarcely admit of doubt." He further observes:—"The practice of 'causing children to pass through the fire to Moloch,' so strongly reprobated by the prophet of old, may be cited as an instance in which Christianity has not yet been able to efface all traces of one of the oldest forms of heathen worship."

Mr. Thornber says:—"The conjoint worship of the sun and moon, the Samen and Sama, husband and wife of nature, has been from these early times so firmly implanted that ages have not uprooted it. Christianity has not banished it. . . . In my youth, on Hallowe'en, under the name of Teanla fires, I have seen the hills throughout the country illuminated with sacred flames, and I can point out many a cairn of fire-broken stones—the high places of the votaries of Bel—where his rites have been performed on the borders of the Ribble age after age. Nor at this day are these mysteries silenced; with a burning whisp of straw at the point of a fork on Sama's festival at the eve of All-hallows, the farmer in some districts of the Fylde encircles his field to protect the coming crop from noxious weeds, the tare and darnel; the old wife refuses to sit the eggs under her crackling hen after sunset; the ignorant boy sits astride a stile, as he looks at the new moon; the bride walks not widdershins to church on her nuptial moon; and if the aged parent addresses not the young pair in the words of Hanno, the Carthagenian in the Pœnula of Plautus, 'O that the good Bel-Samen

may favour them,' or, like the Irish peasant, 'The blessing of Sama and Bel go with you;' still, we have often heard the benediction, 'May the sun shine bright upon you,' in accordance with the old adage,

> 'Blest is the corpse the rain fell on,
> Blest the bride on whom the sun shone.'"

M. Du Chaillu, in his recent "Journey into Ashango-land and further penetration into Equatorial Africa," speaks of a certain superstitious reverence for fire and faith in its medical virtues by the inhabitants of the region he traversed. He relates the following beautiful story respecting their astronomical notions:—"I was not always so solitary in taking my nightly observations, for sometimes one and another of my men or Mayola" (the king or chief), "would stand by me. Of course, I could never make them comprehend what I was doing. Sometimes I used to be amused by their ideas about the heavenly bodies. Like all other remarkable natural objects, they are the subject of whimsical myths amongst them. According to them, the sun and moon are of the same age, but the sun brings daylight and gladness and the moon brings darkness, witchcraft, and death—for death comes from sleep, and sleep commences in darkness. The sun and moon, they say, once got angry with each other, each one claiming to be the eldest. The moon said, 'Who are you, to dare to speak to me? You are alone; you have no people. What! are you to consider yourself equal to me? Look at me,' she continued, showing the stars shining around her, 'these are my people; I am not alone in the world like you.' The sun answered, 'Oh, moon, you bring witchcraft, and it is you have killed all my people, or I should have as many attendants as you.' According to the negroes, people are more liable to die when the moon first makes her appearance and when she is last visible. They say that she calls the people her insects and devours them. The moon with them is the emblem of time and death."

The Teutonic tribes appear, contrary to the general faith of their Aryan kindred, to have regarded the sun as a female and the moon as a male deity. Palgrave, in his "History of the Anglo-Saxons," says:—"They had an odd notion that if they addressed that power as a goddess, their wives would be their masters."

I am strongly inclined to think that the continuance of the practice of lighting bonfires on the 5th of November owes quite as much to the associations connected with the ancient teanla fires of Allhallow-e'en, as to any present Protestant horror of the treason of Guy

Fawkes and his band of conspirators. It may be quite true that the House of Commons, in February, 1605-6 did ordain that the 5th of November should be kept as "*a holiday* FOR EVER in thankfulness to God for our deliverance, and detestation of the Papists;" but ordinances of this class seldom produce more than a temporary excitement amongst large masses of the people. I remember, in my youth, "assisting" at the celebration of several "bonfire days" in Preston and its neighbourhood, sometimes as amateur pyrotechnic artist, when we enjoyed our "fun" without any reference to Protestant or Catholic proclivities. Few, except the better educated, knew what the "Gunpowder Plot" really meant. Some associated it mainly with our own pyrotechnic efforts and other attendant consumption of the explosive compound, on the then special occasion. I rather fancy the ancient November "Allhallow-fires" have in their decadence, merged into the modern "Gunpowder Plot" bonfires; and hence the reason why, in some rural districts, they yet abound, while they are fast disappearing from our more populous towns. I was surprised to find, when riding on an omnibus from Manchester for about five miles on the Bury-road, on the evening of a recent anniversary of this "holiday," that I could count, near and on the horizon, fires of this description by the dozen, and yet, while in Manchester, I had remained ignorant of the fact that bonfire associations were influencing the conduct of any section of society. The merging of one superstition, custom, habit, or tradition, into another, is one of the most ordinary facts of history.

Mr. Richard Edwards, in his "Land's End District," gives a very graphic account of the bonfires lighted up in Cornwall on *Midsummer eve*. Some of the details sufficiently resemble those of our northern "gunpowder plot" demonstrations to prove that a Guy Fawkes and an Act of Parliament are not absolutely necessary to make a bonfire festivity attractive to the descendants of the fire-worshippers of old. He says:—

"On these eves a line of tar barrels, relieved occasionally by large bonfires, is seen in the centre of each of the principal streets in Penzance. On either side of this line, young men and women pass up and down, swinging round their heads heavy torches made of large pieces of folded canvas steeped in tar, and nailed to the ends of sticks between three and four feet long; the flames of some of these almost equal those of the tar barrels. Rows of lighted candles, also, when the air is calm, are fixed outside the windows or along the sides of the streets. In St. Just and other mining parishes, the young

miners, mimicking their father's employments, bore rows of holes in the rocks, load them with gunpowder, and explode them in rapid succession by trains of the same substance. As the holes are not deep enough to split the rocks, the same little batteries serve for many years. . . . In the early part of the evening, children may be seen wreathing wreaths of flowers,—a custom in all probability originating from the ancient use of these ornaments when they danced around the fires. At the close of the fireworks in Penzance, a great number of persons of both sexes, chiefly from the neighbourhood of the quay, used always, until within the last few years, to join hand in hand, forming a long string, and run through the streets, playing 'thread the needle,' heedless of the fireworks showered upon them, and ofttimes leaping over the yet glowing embers. I have, on these occasions, seen boys following one another, jumping through flames higher than themselves. But while this is now done innocently, in every sense of the word, we all know that the passing of children through fire was a very common act of idolatry; and the heathen believed that all persons, and all living things, submitted to this ordeal, would be preserved from evil throughout the year."

I remember well the bonfire processions during election periods, at Preston, above forty years ago, in the palmy days of the late Mr. Henry Hunt. It is not improbable that a remnant of the old superstition hovered about them; and that a latent belief in the "luck-bringing" qualities of fire, to a slight extent, influenced their promoters.

A few years ago I visited, in company with Mr. Thornber, a field at Hardhorn, near Poulton, and was shown by that gentleman some of the stones yet remaining of what he has for many years regarded as the remains of a very ancient Teanlea cairn. Some of the stones bore marks of fire. The mound must, however, have been neglected for a length of time, inasmuch as the shrewd old farmer who had destroyed it had no recollection or traditionary knowledge respecting the use to which it had been appropriated. But from the ashes and other indications of fire which the upper portion of the cairn presented, the worthy husbandman felt confident that "it hed bin a blacksmith's forge i' th' olden time."

Godfrey Higgins in his "Celtic Druids," asserts, on the authority of Hayman Rooke, that "so late as the year 1786, the custom of lighting fires was continued at the Druid temple at Bramham, near Harrowgate, Yorkshire, on the eve of the summer solstice." The Bramham crags referred to present a singularly curious specimen of the

partial disintegration of huge rocks belonging to the millstone grit series. Their present peculiar forms are not now attributed by the learned to human agency, in any marked degree at least, but to the denuding action of water, frost, and other geological conditions or phenomena. Nevertheless, from the wild and even weird aspect of the group and its elevated site, it is by no means improbable that it has been used in early times as a place of worship, or as the locality for the performance of superstitious rites of the class referred to. Doubtless, other localities of a similar character might be pointed out. "Beacon Fell," near "Parlick Pike," and the "Tandle Hills," near Rochdale, may have been used as places of public assembly, and for the performance of similar superstitious observances. The same may be said of Ingleborough, which yet exhibits remains of Keltic occupation.

This fire-worship, amongst a barbarous people, appears to have had by no means a strange or unnatural origin. Mr. Walter Kelly, after a very elaborate analysis, concludes that the Prometheus of the Greeks and the Vedic Mâtarisvan are "essentially the same." "The elder fire gods, Agni and Rudra," he says, "had a troop of fire-kindling attendants, called Pramathas or Pramâthas," and he regards Prometheus as the Greek form of this word. He calls attention to the fact that Diodorus says of the celebrated Titan, that "according to the mythographers he stole fire from the gods, but that in reality he was the inventor of the fire-making instrument." The discoverer of the chark, or "fire-drill," an instrument for obtaining fire by artificial means, would be so great a benefactor to a people that had to suffer all the inconveniences resulting from occasional fireless hearths, that we may well understand why he should be invested by his astonished and delighted fellow-savages with miraculous or supernatural powers.* Doubtless the production of fire by the rubbing together of two pieces of dry timber preceded this discovery, but, under many circumstances, the operation must have been a most laborious one, and ofttimes impracticable. But with the "chark" the result was nearly as certain as when flint, steel, and tinder were employed for this purpose. It was a very simple instrument indeed, but it has nevertheless exercised a marvellous influence on the destinies of mankind. It consisted merely of a piece of soft dry wood with a hole drilled

* Du Chaillu, in his "Journey to Ashango-land," relates a story in which he suddenly struck a light with a lucifer match, to the astonishment of the benighted Africans, who regarded the feat as an additional proof of his being the "Oguisi" or "spirit" they had declared him to be.

in its centre, into which a rod of hard wood, ash, or oak, was placed, and caused to revolve with rapidity by a cord, passed round it, being pulled and slackened at each end alternately. A wheel and its axle have hence become types of the sun and the thunderbolt. Fire produced in this original way was considered sacred. Even the Greeks and Romans, as well as the Kelts, and some Christian populations until recent times, adopted the same or a similar process in the lighting of fires connected with religious ceremonies. Mr. Kelly says "the Church has not quite yet succeeded in effacing the vestiges of their heathen origin. This is especially evident in the usages of many districts, where the purity of the Easter fire (an idea borrowed from Pagan tradition) is secured by deriving the kindling flame either from the consecrated Easter candles, or from the new born and perfectly pure element produced by the priest from flint and steel." The Vedic chark was made from the wood of two sacred trees; "the sami sprang from heavenly fire sent down to earth, and the asvattha from the vessel which contained it." Kelly adds:—"The idea of marriage, suggested by such a union of the two trees, is also developed in the Veda with great amplitude and minuteness of detail, and is a very prominent element in the whole cycle of myths connected with the chark." Doubtless, we have here exposed the root of the entire system of phallic worship, stripped of much, if not all, of the grossness afterwards attendant upon it. It appears that amongst the Peruvians, who were sun-worshippers, the great national festival was held at the summer solstice. They collected the rays of that luminary in a concave mirror, by which means they rekindled their fires. Sometimes, indeed, they obtained their "need-fire" by friction of wood. Amongst the Mexicans likewise grand religious celebrations took place at the close of the fifty-second year, when the extinguished fires were rekindled "by the friction of sticks." This is a very general practice amongst savage tribes at the present day. Mr. Angus says some of the western tribes of Australia "have no means of kindling fire. They say that it formerly came from the north." Should that of one tribe unfortunately become extinguished, there was nothing for it but journeying to a neighbouring encampment and borrowing a light. The Tasmanians are in the same predicament. The Fegeeans obtain fire by friction. So do other South Sea Islanders, as well as many of the North American Indians. The Dacotahs and Iroquois use an instrument not unlike the drilling bow at present employed for a certain class of work in Europe. According to Father Gabian, fire was utterly unknown to the natives of the Ladrone Islands "till

Magellan, provoked by their repeated thefts, burned one of their villages. When they saw their wooden houses blazing, they first thought the fire a beast which fed upon wood, and some of them, who came too near, being burnt, the rest stood afar off, lest they should be devoured or poisoned by this powerful animal."

The practice of kindling original or "needfire" from a superstitious reverence of its sacred character, is yet very common in various parts of Germany, Scotland, and Ireland, and even in England. Mr. Kemble quotes, from the Lanercost Chronicle, of the year 1268, a denunciation by the pious writer, of a practice which "certain bestial persons, monks in garb but not in mind," had taught the ignorant peasantry. This practice consisted in the extraction of fire from wood by friction, and the setting up of what he styles a "simulacrum Priapi," with a view to protect their cattle from disease. This image of Priapus is supposed to refer to the sun-god Fro or Fricco, who, according to Wolf, was worshipped until a very recent period in Belgium, under the form of Priapus. Priapus, the god of gardens or fertility, was the son of Bacchus and Venus. In the more mountainous portions of Wales a remnant of evidently heathen imageworship, of a somewhat similar character, survived till relatively modern times. In the reign of Henry the Eighth, an idol, or what old Fuller calls "a great lubberly image," was removed from the diocese of St. Asaph, and publicly burnt in Smithfield. This image was known by the name of "Darvell Gatheron;" and it was said that the country people were in the habit of sacrificing oxen and sheep to it. Hence its condemnation by the church authorities.

Grimm refers to a remarkable instance of this superstition, which occurred in the island of Mull as recently as 1767, which vividly illustrates the "toughness" of tradition, as Dasent expresses it. He says:—"In consequence of a disease amongst the black cattle, the people agreed to perform an incantation, though they esteemed it a wicked thing. They carried to the top of Carnmoor a wheel and nine spindles, long enough to produce fire by friction. If the fire were not produced before noon, the incantation lost its effect. They failed for several days running. They attributed this failure to the obstinacy of one householder, who would not let his fires be put out for what he considered so wrong a purpose. However, by bribing his servants, they contrived to have them extinguished, and on that morning raised their fire. They then sacrificed a heifer, cutting in pieces and burning, while yet alive, the diseased part. They then

lighted their own hearths from the pile, and ended by feasting on the remains. Words of incantation were repeated by an old man from Morven, who came as the master of the ceremonies, and who continued speaking all the time the fire was being raised. This man was living a beggar at Bellochroy. Asked to repeat the spell, he said the sin of repeating it once had brought him to beggary, and that he dared not say those words again." Many other instances might be cited in Scotland and Ireland; but the one most to the present purpose is related by Mr. T. T. Wilkinson, in which a Lancashire man "unconsciously resorted to the old worship of Baal, and consumed a live calf in a fire, in order to counteract the influences of his unknown enemies." This individual was well known to Mr. Wilkinson. He firmly believed that witchcraft was at the root of all his troubles, and that his cattle had died in consequence of its spells. It appears he had previously tried the famous Lancashire expedient to render his stables and shippons proof against his supernatural enemies—the nailing of horse-shoes on all his doors—without obtaining the desired result; so, in desperation, knowing the tradition, he sacrificed a living calf to the fire god Bel!

The following paragraph appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, on the 29th of June, 1867:—

"The accounts given by the Irish newspapers of the extent to which the old superstition of fire-lighting on Midsummer eve still prevails show how slowly the relics of Paganism disappear among country people, and how natural it was that the old idolatries should come at last to be known as the creed of the 'Pagana,' the dwellers in villages. These Midsummer fires, lighted annually on the hills, are simply relics of the worship of Bel. Beltane-day, or Belteine, is still a May-day as well as a Midsummer festival in the more ignorant districts of Scotland as well as of Ireland, and similar superstitious practices are connected with the lighting of the fires; and, what is still more remarkable, the word is still used in some Scotch almanacs as a term well-known to everybody. In a number of the *Scotsman* a few years ago appeared the announcement that 'On Beltane-day Mr. Robertson was elected convener of the Trades of Cannongate in Edinburgh.' The next year the following is to be found:—'On Beltane-day the weavers, dyers, etc., of the Cannongate re-elected their office bearers.'"*

* The *Dundee Advertiser*, Nov. 1869, contained the following paragraph:—

Hallowe'en at Balmoral Castle.—This time-honoured festival was duly celebrated at Balmoral Castle on Saturday evening, in a manner not soon to be forgotten

The records of the Presbytery of Dingwall show that as recently as the latter portion of the seventeenth century, on the island of Innis Maree, in Loch Maree, bulls were offered up as a sacrifice, and milk offered on the hill sides as a libation. In the year 1678, the Presbytery took action against some of the Mackenzie family, "for sacrificing a bull in a heathenish manner, in the island of St. Rufus, for the recovery of the health of Cirstane Mackenzie, who was formerly sick and valetudinarie." Mr. Henderson, in his "Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties," mentions an instance, "within fifteen years ago," of "a herd of cattle, in that county (Moray) being attacked with fever," when, "one of them was sacrificed by burning alive, as a propitiatory offering for the rest."

Mr. Robert Hunt, in his "Drolls, Traditions, and Superstitions of Old Cornwall," published in 1865, says that he has been informed "that within the last few years a calf has been thus sacrificed by a farmer in a district where churches, chapels, and schools abound." He afterwards adds:—"While correcting these sheets I am informed of two recent instances of this superstition. One of them was the sacrifice of a calf by a farmer near Pontreath, for the purpose of removing a disease which had long followed his horses and cows. The other was the burning of a living lamb, to save, as the farmer said, "his flocks from spells which had been cast on 'em."

The Midsummer fires, at the vigil of St. John the Baptist, and the yule log ceremonies at Christmas, may be referred to a similar origin. Brand says:—"The Pagan rites of this festival (Midsummer Eve)

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by those who took part in the enjoyments of the evening. As the shades of evening were closing in upon the Strath, numbers of torch-lights were observed approaching the Castle, both from the cottages on the eastern portion of the estate and also those on the west. The torches from the western side were probably the more numerous, and as the different groups gathered together the effect was very fine. Both parties met in front of the Castle, the torch-bearers numbering nearly one hundred. Along with those bearing the torches were a great many people belonging to the neighbourhood. Dancing was commenced by the torch-bearers dancing a "Huachan" in fine style, to the lilting strains of Mr. Ross, the Queen's piper. The effect was greatly heightened by the display of bright lights of various colours from the top of the staircase of the Tower. After dancing for some time, the torch-bearers proceeded round the Castle in martial order, and as they were proceeding down the granite staircase at the north-west corner of the Castle, the procession presented a singularly beautiful and romantic appearance. Having made the circuit of the Castle, the remainder of the torches were thrown in a pile at the south-west corner, thus forming a large bonfire, which was speedily augmented with other combustibles until it formed a burning mass of huge proportions, round which dancing was spiritedly carried on. Her Majesty witnessed the proceedings with apparent interest for some time, and the company enjoyed themselves none the less heartily on that account. Mr. Begg, distiller, Lochnagar, had also a splendid bonfire on Cairnbeg, round which merry groups danced torch in hand.

at the summer solstice may be considered as a counterpart of those used at the winter solstice at Yule-tide." The wheel, the type of the sun, was common to both festivities. Darand describes the practice, at the feast of St. John, of rolling about a wheel, "to signify that the sun, then occupying the highest place in the zodiac, was beginning to descend." The old poet, Naogeorgus, describes the wheel as being covered with straw, which was set on fire at the top of a high mountain, and then despatched on its downward course. He adds that the people imagined all their ill luck accompanied the wheel in its descent.

The writer of the old homily *De Festo Sancti Johannis Baptistæ*, when referring to these observances, speaks of three fires being kindled, one of which was called "a Bone fire; another is clene woode and no bones, and that is called a Wode fire, for people to sit and wake thereby; the third is made of wode and bones, and is called Saynt Johanny's Fyre.* The first fyre, as a great clerke, Johan Belleth, telleth he saw in a certayne countrey, so in the countrey there was soo greate hete the which causid that dragons to go together in tokenynge that Johan dyed in brennynge love and charyté of God and man. . . . Then as these dragons flewe in th' ayre, they shed down to the water froth of ther Kynde, and so envenymed the waters, and caused moche people for to take theyr deth thereby, and many dyverse sykenesse. Wyse clerkes knoweth well that dragons hate nothyng more than the stenche of brennynge bones, and therefore they gaderyd as many as they mighte fynde, and brent them; and so with the stenche thereof they drove away the dragons, and so they were brought out of greete dysease."

Brand regards this as a "pleasant piece of absurdity;" but it appears that the quaint old writer, after all, is but relating that which was believed to be true in his own age, and which after-gained knowledge enables us to distinguish as a remnant of the old Ayran superstition or myth, in a mediæval dress. These rolling fiery wheels, burning brands, bonfires, and processions round fields, &c., are common to both the Keltic and Teutonic branches of the Aryan race, and have evidently a similar origin. Kemble quotes an ancient Latin

*I have not met with a thoroughly satisfactory etymology of the word bon-fire. It may mean good fire, that is sacred fire, or bone-fire, as the old writer suggests; but I am inclined to think *boon* fire is worth consideration, as the ceremonies and sacrifices were performed in order to extract a boon, a gift, or favour from the god Bel. Free service rendered by a tenant to his lord, as part of his tenure, was called boon work. Dr. Hibbert-Ware records an old saying in the north of England to the effect that when a man has been working for nothing he has "been served like a boon-shearer."

MS., which he found among the Harleian collection, which gives a precisely similar description of the St. John's fires. It is not improbable that it may have been written by the "learned clerke Johan Belleth," to whom the writer of the homily refers. Walter Kelly, speaking of it says, "Here we have again the primitive Aryan dragon Ahi, at his old work in the sultry midsummer weather." He contends that all the details referred to, as attendant on the St. John's fires, have been demonstrated by Dr. Kuhn to be "in striking accordance with the Vedic legend of Indra's fight with the midsummer demons. The passage quoted by Kemble, besides stating expressly that the course of the blazing wheel was meant to represent the descent of the sun from its solstitial height, brings the St. John's fires in immediate connection with the dragons that poison the waters, just as did the demon Vritra, otherwise called Ahi, the dragon. He possessed himself of the sun-wheel and the treasures of Heaven, seized the (white) women, kept them prisoners in his cavern, and laid a curse on the waters, until Indra released the captives and took off the curse. The same conception is repeated in countless legends of mountains that open on St. John's day, when the imprisoned white women come forth, and the hour approaches in which the spell laid upon them and upon the buried treasures will be broken. . . . Here we see at once that the German" (and Keltic) "custom was nothing else than a dramatic representation of the great elemental battle portrayed in the sacred books of the southern Aryans. In the one the blazing wheel stands on the top of the hill, in the other the sun stands on the summit of the cloud mountain. Both descend from their heights, and both are extinguished, the sun in the cloud sea, behind the cloud mountain, the wheel in the river at the foot of the hill." One name given to a combatant on the dragon's side is Kuyava, which is interpreted the "harvest spoiler, or the spoiled harvest." The following passage in the Rig Veda is uttered by Indra, when he resolves to destroy the monster,—"Friend Vishnu, stride vastly; sky give room for the thunderbolt to strike; let us slay Vritra and let loose the waters." His worshippers likewise exclaim,—"When, thunderer, thou didst by thy might slay Vritra, who stopped up the streams, then thy dear steeds grew."

The Rev. G. W. Cox says :—"The Nemean lion is the offspring of Typhon, Orthros, or Echidna; in other words it is sprung from Vritra, the dark thief, and Ahi, the throttling snake of darkness, and it is as surely slain by Heracles as the snakes which had assaulted him in his cradle. Another child of the same horrid parents is the

Lernaian Hydra, its very name denoting a monster who, like the Sphinx or the Panis, shuts up the waters and causes drought. It has many heads, one being immortal, as the storm must constantly supply new clouds, while the vapours are driven off by the sun into space. Hence the story went that although Heracles could burn away its mortal heads, as the sun burns up the clouds, still he can but hide away the mist or vapour itself, which at its appointed time must again darken the sky."

Dr. Kuhn contends that the clothing of wheels with straw and the extinguishing of them when set on fire by immersion in a river, as is done in the vine-growing districts of Germany, with the view to secure a good harvest, is to be referred to this source. In support of his view, he enters into an elaborate philological argument to show that *yava* must have originally meant grass in general, afterwards cereal grasses, and that its root gave birth to the name of the grain from which the oldest bread-stuff known was made. He says—"But I go still further, and I believe that *Kuyava* was also regarded as the spoiler of vegetation in general, who parched up the plants used in making the fermented liquor, soma, and amongst these plants the Hindus included *yava*, which, in this case, meant barley or rice. It will be seen in the sequel that the demon possesses himself also of the heavenly soma (the moisture of the clouds), that he is robbed of it by Indra, and that the like conception is found also among the Greeks and the Germans. This, then, sufficiently explains the hope of a good wine year, which was associated with the victory in the above-described German customs."

The Venerable Bede, in his treatise on the "Nature of Things," gives us what may be termed the scientific view respecting rain and lightning which obtained about his time. It is singularly in accordance with Dr. Kuhn's interpretation of the myth now under consideration. He says :—

"Lightning is produced by the rubbing together of clouds, after the manner of flints struck together, the thunder occurring at the same time, but sound reaches the ears more slowly than light the eyes. For all things the collision creates fire. Some say that while air draws water in vapour from the depths, it draws also fire heat-wise, and by their contact the horrid crash of thunder is produced; and *if the fire conquer, it will be injurious to fruits; if water beneficial*; but that the fire of lightning has so much the more penetrative power, from being made of subtler elements than that which is in use by us."

It is merely necessary that the rhetorical figure, personification, be freely applied to this passage, with due reverence towards the ancient superstitions, and the mythic element which lies at the root of these singular customs is reproduced.

It is evident the whole have reference to the influence of the burning heat of the midsummer sun, which induces long droughts, and parches the soil and the vegetation; and to the delight engendered when that heat is mitigated, and the scorched earth is again rendered fruitful by copious showers, the product of the thunderstorm. And to this source, Mr. Kelly justly contends, may be referred all the supernatural dragon stories of our nurseries, whether fought "by Pagan or Christian champions, from Apollo, Hercules, and Siegfried, down to St. George, and to that modern worthy More, of Morehall,

Who slew the dragon of Wantley."

The learned Pettingall has shown that the dragon slain by the English champion and patron, St. George, was, by the ancient Orientals, engraved on amulets, and that it was intended to symbolise the virtues of Mithras, the sun. He says, "From the Pagans the use of these charms passed to the Basilidians, and in their Abraxas, the traces of the antient Mithras and the more modern St. George, are equally visible. In the dark ages, the Christians borrowed their superstitions from the heretics, but they disguised the origin of them, and transformed into the saint the sun of the Persians and the archangel of the Gnostics."*

Dr. Wilson, when speaking of the art examples pertaining to what is termed, in Western Europe, the "Stone age," says,—

"In no single case is any attempt made to imitate leaf or flower,

* Since the above was written the following paragraph has appeared in the newspapers:—

An Apology for Fire Worship.—Tuesday, the 21st March, 1866, being the entrance of Sol into the zodiacal sign of the Ram, there was held at the Persian Embassy, Avenue d' Antin, Paris, the festival of Nourous Sultaniez, or New Year's Day of the Shah. His Excellency Hassan Ali Khan presided over a large assemblage of distinguished guests, and informed them in the course of the festivity that they were celebrating a red-letter day as old as nineteen centuries before the birth of Christ, first instituted by Djemchid, of the dynasty of Pischdadiens, who originated the solar computation of years. His excellency proceeded to recall the fire-worship of his country, which sprang from the primæval idolatry having for object that great luminary. It was still to fire that he fondly looked for the regeneration of Persia. Fire had changed the face of Europe. With the steam engine, the railroad, the electric spark, the screw or paddle ship, far more than in gunpowder or rifled cannon, fire was the great benefactor that would bless one day the land of his forefathers, who had instinctively worshipped that element in secret anticipation of what was to come. The remarks of his excellency were cordially received.

bird, beast, or any simple, natural object; and when in the bronze work of the later Iron period, imitative forms at length appear, they are chiefly the snake and dragon shapes and patterns, borrowed seemingly by Celtic and Teutonic wanderers, with the wild fancies of their mythology, from the far Eastern cradle-land of their birth."

Marsden, in his "History of Sumatra," says that during an eclipse, the natives make "a loud noise with sounding instruments, to prevent one luminary from devouring the other, as the Chinese, to frighten away the dragon, a superstition that has its source in the ancient systems of astronomy (particularly the Hindu), where the nodes of the moon are identified with the dragon's head and tail."

The dragon was the standard of the West Saxons, and of the English previous to the Norman Conquest. It formed one of the supporters of the Royal arms borne by all our Tudor monarchs, with the exception of Queen Mary, who substituted the eagle. Several of the Plantagenet kings and princes inscribed a figure of the dragon on their banners and shields. Peter Langtoffe says, at the battle of Lewis, fought in 1264:—

The King (Henry III.) schewed forth his schild his Dragon full austere.

Another authority says the said king ordered to be made "a dragon in the manner of a banner, of a certain red silk embroidered with gold; its tongue like a flaming fire must always seem to be moving; its eyes must be made of sapphire, or of some other stone suitable for that purpose."

Notwithstanding the transformations which several of them may have undergone from relatively modern local influences, there can be little doubt the fiery-dragon and the numerous huge worm traditions of the North of England enshrine relics of Aryan superstitions. Besides the dragon Ahi, we have the Vedic great serpent Sesha, to which reference has been made in the first chapter of this work. We find the Devas, when at war with their enemies the Asuras, agreed to a truce in order that they might "churn the ocean," and so procure some soma or drink of the gods, or milk the heavenly cows (the clouds) wherewith to slake their grievous thirst. They coiled this great serpent around a hill or mountain in the sea, and used him as a rope under whose action the hill spun rapidly round until the heavenly liquor (rain water)was procured in sufficient quantity. The famous Lambton worm, when coiled round a hill, was pacified with copious draughts of milk, and his blood flowed freely when he was pierced by the spear heads attached to the armour of the returned crusader.*

* Sir Bernard Burke says the legend asserts that the knight consulted a witch as to

The Linton worm coiled itself round a hill, and by its poisonous breath, destroyed the neighbouring animal and vegetable life. The knight who destroyed it used burning pitch in the operation. The contractions of this huge worm in dying, are said to have left indented spiral lines on the sides of Warmington hill. The Pollard worm is described as "a venomous serpent which did much harm to man and beast," while that of Stockburn is designated as the "worm, *dragon, or fiery flying serpent* which destroyed man, woman, and child." These worms were said to have been slain by the spears or swords of knights, evidently modern substitutes for the thunderbolt of Indra, the ancient Aryan "god of the firmament." A *bonâ fide* slain worm, however, seems from the records to have been a very small affair in comparison with the gigantic monsters of the Durham traditions. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, a writer of the family history of the Somervilles, referring to the worm which John Somerville slew, in the reign of William the Lion, avers that it was "in length three Scots yards, and somewhat bigger than an ordinary man's leg, with a head more proportionable to its length than greatness, in form and colour like to our common muir-edders." As the valour of Indra fertilised the earth; so virtue of a similar quality in a high degree procured broad lands for the earthly champion, from his grateful sovereign.

It is by no means improbable, if, as Mr. D. Haigh contends, in his "Conquest of Britain by the Saxons," the scene of the fine old Anglo-Saxon poem Beowulf, was near Hartlepool, in the county of Durham, that these monster worm traditions of the north of England may be the remains of the mythic superstitions therein embodied.* The

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the best method of attacking the monster serpent or dragon, as this worm is sometimes styled. The witch duly instructed him, and he was victorious in the combat which followed. A condition, however, was attached, namely that the knight should follow up the achievement by slaying as a kind of sacrifice the first living thing he met. If he failed in this, "for nine generations the lords of Lambton would never die in their beds." It was intended that a dog should be placed so as to immediately attract the eye of the conqueror, but unfortunately the plot was accidentally marred, and the knight's father first confronted him. Lambton refused to fulfil the condition, under such circumstances. It is stated to be a fact that afterwards nine successive lords of Lambton died otherwise than in their beds.

* Mr. Haigh fixes Heorot, the site of the mead-hall, or banqueting house of Hrothgar, chief or king of the Scyldings, at Hartlepool. King Oswy, brother and successor of St. Oswald, consecrated his daughter Elfleda to the service of God as a nun, as an act of thanksgiving for his victory over the pagan Mercian King Penda, at Winwidfield, near Leeds (some say near Winwick, Lancashire.) Elfleda was placed in the monastery called Herut-ed (Hartlepool), which is believed to be the Heorot of the oldest Anglo-Saxon poem extant.

giant and sprite Grendel, the "Ghost-slayer," and his equally sanguinary mother, are evidently personifications of evil influences. After Beowulf had despatched the male monster, he proceeded to the pool, in the *depths of which* he successfully contended with the female. As he and his followers sat in the deep shadow of the wood overhanging the "*bottomless*" pool "they saw along the water many of the *worm kind*, strange *sea dragons*, also in clefts of the ness Nickers lying." Professor Henry Morley, in his "English Writers," gives a summary of the poem, the following passage in which demonstrates the great antiquity of this superstition :—

"Afterward the broad land came under the sway of Beowulf. He held it well for fifty winters, until in the dark nights a dragon, which in a stone mound watched a hoard of gold and cups, won mastery. It was a hoard heaped up in sin, its lords were long since dead ; the last earl, before dying, hid it in the earth-cave, and for three hundred winters the *great scather* held the cave, until some man, finding by chance a rich cup, took it to his lord. Then the den was searched while the worm slept ; again and again when the dragon awoke there had been theft. He found not the man, but *wasted the whole land with fire* ; nightly, the *fiendish air-flyer made fire grow hateful* to the sight of men. Then it was told to Beowulf. . . . He sought out the dragon's den and fought with him in awful strife. One wound the poison-worm struck in the flesh of Beowulf. . . . Then, while the warrior-king sat deathsick on a stone, he sent his thanes to see the cups and dishes in the den of the dread twilight-flyer. . . . He said, 'I for this gold have wisely sold my life ; let others care now for the people's need. I may be here no longer.'"

Mr. John Mitchell Kemble, who published an amended prose translation of Beowulf, in 1833, considered the poem to be founded upon legends which existed anterior to the conquest of the northern part of Britain by the Angles. Beowulf he regarded as the name of a god, one of the ancestors of Woden, and who appears in the poem "as a defender, a protecting and redeeming being." The hero belonged to the tribe of Geáts or Goths. This word etymologists trace to the Anglo-Saxon geótan and geát, which imply a pouring forth. One of Odin's names amongst the gods, according to the Edda, was Gautr, the god of abundance. The monster Grendel is thus described in the English summary of the poem by Professor Henry Morley :—

"The grim guest was Grendel, he that held the moors, the fen, and fastness. Forbidden the homes of mankind, the daughters of Cain brought forth in darkness misshapen giants, elves, and

orkens, such giants as long warred with God, and he was one of these." The reference to the daughters of Cain would seem to suggest an interpolation by a transcriber after the introduction of Christianity.

Geoffrey of Monmouth relates a story of a certain mythic King of Northumbria named Morvidus, who was less fortunate than Beowulf, inasmuch as he lost his life, and gained nothing for his people by its sacrifice. But then, we are informed, he "was a most cruel tyrant." It appears that the land north of the Humber was invaded in great force by a king of the Moreni (near Boulogne). He was defeated by Morvidus, who abused his victory by the most monstrous acts of cruelty. Whilst thus engaged, Geoffrey informs us that "there came from the coasts of the Irish Sea a most cruel monster, that was continually devouring the people upon the sea coasts. As soon as he heard of it, he ventured to go and encounter it alone. When he had in vain spent all his darts upon it, the monster rushed upon him, and with open jaws swallowed him up like a small fish."

These dragon monsters are often found in connection with imprisoned maidens, and treasures buried in caves or the inner recesses of mountains. Some mythographers regard the maiden as a personification of the dawn imprisoned by the darkness of the night, and afterwards freed by the rays of the sun. In the Vedic myths, besides Ahi, the throttling snake, and Vritra, the dragon, there is Pani, the thief and seducer, who stole the cows of Indra from their heavenly pastures, hid them in his dark cloud cave, and attempted to corrupt Sarama (the dawn), when, at the bidding of the lightning god, she demanded the restoration of the plundered cattle. Max Müller, the Rev. G. W. Cox, and others, contend that these incidents underlie most of the mythical epics of all the Aryan nations. They say that the siege of Troy, even, "is a reflection of the daily siege of the East by the solar powers that every evening are robbed of their brightest treasures in the West."

The celebrated mediæval metrical romance, "Kyng Alisaunder," translated into English verse, in the thirteenth century, by an unknown author, is a complete *repertoire* of these dragon, worm, and monster superstitions. According to it, the hero was the son of a magician who appeared to his mother in the form of a great dragon of the air. At his birth "the earth shook, the sea became green, the sun ceased to shine, the moon appeared and became black, the thunder crashed." The original is said to have been written by

Simeon Seth, keeper of the imperial wardrobe at Constantinople, about the year 1060. It is founded on Oriental legends, and was translated and enlarged into Latin and French before the English version appeared. Many of its monstrosities are evidently degraded forms of Grecian and other Aryan myths.

The celebrated prophecy of Merlin, in Geoffrey of Monmouth's "History of Britain," is full of malignant dragons, white and red, which fight furiously, and "cast forth fire with their breath." The red dragon, in one instance, the prophet says, shall return to his proper manners, and turn his rage upon himself. Therefore shall the *revenge of the Thunderer show itself, for every field shall disappoint the husbandman.* Mortality shall snatch away the people, and make a desolation over all countries."

Dragons, huge worms, and serpents appear frequently to be confounded in Merlin's prophecy.* One sentence reads thus: "She shall be encompassed with the adder of Lincoln, who with a horrible hiss shall give notice of his presence to a multitude of dragons. Then shall the dragons encounter and tear one another to pieces. The winged shall oppress that which wants wings, and fasten its claws into the poisonous cheeks." In another instance, the Aryan dragon, or harvest destroyer, is very apparent. Merlin says:—"To him shall succeed a husbandman of Albania, at whose back shall be a serpent. He shall be employed in ploughing the ground, that the country may become white with corn. *The serpent shall endeavour to diffuse his poison, in order to blast the harvest.*" Again he says:—"There shall be a miserable desolation of the kingdom, and the floors of the harvests shall return to the fruitful forests. The white dragon shall rise again, and invite over a daughter of Germany. Our gardens shall be again replenished with foreign seed, and the red one shall pine away at the end of the pond. After that shall the German worm be crowned, and the brazen prince buried." Merlin's red and white dragons are intended directly to personify the British and Saxon races of men, as the red and white roses in after time served as emblems of the houses of Lancaster and York; but the origin of the mythic form of expression is very apparent.

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* Professor Owen (Palæontology, page 312) gives "slow-worms, serpents," as the English equivalent of *Ophidia*, the name of his eleventh order of the class *Reptilia*. Hence the confusion of traditionary worms, serpents, and dragons is not quite so absurd as modern non-scientific persons generally imagine. The Rev. G. W. Cox, referring to the Greek aspect of these mythic monsters, says:—"When the word Dragon, which is only another form of Dorkas, the clear-eyed gazelle, became the name for serpents, these mythical beings were necessarily transformed into snakes."

The *Saxon Chronicle* contains a paragraph under the date 793, which illustrates the power of this superstition in the North of England at that period. The passage itself likewise supplies sufficient evidence to connect its interpretation with the Aryan myth under consideration. We read: "A. 793. This year dire forewarnings came over the land of the North-humbrians, and miserably terrified the people; these were excessive whirlwinds and *lightnings*; and *fiery dragons* were seen flying in the air. A *great famine soon followed these tokens.*"

Mr. Baring-Gould says,—"In a Slovakian legend the dragon sleeps in a mountain cave through the winter months, but at the equinox bursts forth. 'In a moment the heaven was darkened and became black as pitch, only illumined by the fire which flashed from the dragon's jaws and eyes. The earth shuddered, the stones rattled down the mountain sides into the glens; right and left, left and right, did the dragon lash his tail, overthrowing pines and bushes, and snapping them as reeds. He evacuated such floods of water that the mountain torrents were full. But after a while his power was exhausted; he lashed no more with his tail, ejected no more water, and spat no more fire.'" Mr. Gould adds,—"I think it impossible not to see in this description a spring-tide thunderstorm."

The following paragraph, published in the *Calcutta Englishman* last year (1871), demonstrates that this class of superstition still lingers in India:—

"An Astronomical Prediction.—The *Urdu Akhbar* says that Maulvi Mohammed Salimuz-yaman, the famous astronomer of Rampur, whose deductions have generally turned out right, has foretold that in the coming year (1872) a blaze of light resembling a shooting star, the like of which no mortal has yet seen, will be visible in the sky. 'It will dazzle the eyes of the people of particular places with lustre, and, after remaining for a *ghari* (*i.e.*, 24 minutes), will vanish. The direction in which it will make its appearance will be the North Pole, and accordingly the people of northern countries will see it distinctly. Probably the natives of China and Persia will likewise have a sight of it. The effect of this meteor will be that the extent of the globe over which its light will fall will be visited by famine during the year, and a large number of the people inhabiting it will be destroyed, while vegetation will be also scanty.'"

Veritable comets appear to have at times been confounded with these fiery dragons. On the death of Aurelius Ambrosius, brother to Uther, father of the renowned Arthur, according to Geoffrey of Mon-

mouth, "there appeared a star of wonderful magnitude and brightness, darting forth a ray, at the end of which was a globe of fire, in form of a dragon, out of whose mouth issued two rays, one of which seemed to stretch out itself beyond the extent of Gaul, the other towards the Irish sea, and ended in seven lesser rays."

Geoffrey further informs us that, after Uther's first great victory, "remembering the explanation which Merlin had made of the star above mentioned, he commanded two dragons to be made of gold, in likeness of the dragon which he had seen at the ray of the star. As soon as they were finished, which was done with wonderful nicety of workmanship, he made a present of one to the cathedral church of Winchester, but reserved the other for himself to be carried along with him to his wars. From this time, therefore, he was called Uther Pendragon, which, in the British tongue, signifies the dragon's head; the occasion of this appellation being Merlin's prediction, from the appearance of the dragon, that he should be king." The same "historical" romancer likewise informs us that the redoubtable Arthur himself, after he had embarked at Southampton, on his expedition against Rome, about midnight, during a brisk gale, in a dream, "saw a bear flying in the air, at the noise of which all the shores trembled; also a terrible dragon flying from the west, which enlightened the country with the brightness of its eyes. When these two met they began a dreadful fight; but the dragon, with its fiery breath, burned the bear which often assaulted him, and threw him down scorched to the ground." This, of course, was interpreted to augur Arthur's victory over the Emperor. Singularly enough, as has been before observed, we find, in authentic history, that the "Golden Dragon" was the standard of the *Saxon* kings of Wessex. When Cuthred defeated "Ethelbald the Proud," King of Mercia, at Beorgforda (Burford, in Oxfordshire), in 752, "the golden dragon, the ensign of Wessex," was borne by his general, Ethelhun, termed "the presumptuous alderman," owing to a previous unsuccessful act of rebellion.

Dragon superstitions appear to have been earnestly believed by mediæval alchemists, and even early chemists and physicians. An old German work on alchemy (1625) informs us, as "a great wonder and very strange," that the dragon contains the greatest "medicament," and that "there is a dragon lives in the forest who has no want of poison; when he sees the sun or fire he spits venom, which flies about fearfully. No living animal can be cured of it; even the basilisk does not equal him. He who can properly kill this serpent has overcome all his danger. His colours increase in death; physic

is produced from his poison, which he entirely consumes, and eats his own venomous tail. This must be accomplished by him, in order to produce the noblest balm. Such great virtue as we will point out herein that all the learned shall rejoice."

The poison spitted out on sight of the sun or fire is evidently analagous to the breath of the Aryan dragon Ahi, who scorched the earth. The conqueror of the said dragon takes the place of Indra, who, by discharging his lightning spear into the rain cloud, subdues the monster, and converts his poison (excessive heat), into a medicine or balm, which aids in the fertilisation of the earth.

This is in accordance with the Greek legend, which asserted that Æsculapius or Asklêpios, the god of medicine, "wrought his wonderful cures through the blood of Gorgo." Hence the serpent became his symbol. At Epidaurus the god was supposed to manifest himself in the form of a yellowish brown snake, abundant in that neighbourhood. It frequented the temple, was large in size, but harmless and easily tamed. The Rev. G. W. Cox, says, "throughout Hellas, Asklêpios remained the healer and restorer of life, and accordingly the serpent is everywhere his special emblem, as the mythology of the Linga would lead us to expect." Again he says, "the symbol of the Phallos in its physical characteristics suggested the form of the serpent, which thus became the emblem of life and healing, and as such appears by the side of the Hellenic Asklêpios, and in the brazen crucified serpent venerated by the Jewish people until it was destroyed by Hezekiah."

According to the Edda, the Scandinavians believed that after the various gods had, for a considerable time, alternately overthrown each other, the "fiery snake" would consume "universal nature with all-destroying flames." The word "Edda" means "Mother of Poetry." The contents of the Edda have been styled "half oriental and half northern."

Remains of ancient serpent worship have been recently discovered in America and in Scotland. Some writers indeed regard the temples at Abury and Stonehenge as belonging to this class. One in North America, described by Mr. Squier, is a mound 700 feet long, fashioned in the form of a serpent. At the recent meeting of the British Association in Edinburgh, Mr. John S. Phené, F.G.S., described a mound of this character, which he had discovered in Argyleshire. A large cairn forms the head of the monster, which is 300 feet in length. The spinal column, with its sinuous windings, is distinctly marked out by carefully adjusted stones, now covered with peat. To detect the exact form of the

entire reptile, it is necessary that the whole should be seen at one view from above. A megalithic chamber was found beneath the head of the serpent, or saurian, which contained burnt earth and bones, charcoal, and charred nutshells, and a flint implement with the edge serrated like a saw. The mound is described as being in a remarkably perfect condition, considering its great antiquity.

Some writers, and notably one, some years ago in "Chambers's Journal," discoursing on dragon superstitions, have suggested, as remains of the traditionary Moa of New Zealand is still said to be found in some portions of the islands, that our early ancestors may have had a slight knowledge of the existence of some of the huge saurian reptiles, known to us geologically in the fossil condition. This attempt to give a naturalistic solution of the problem at first sight is very plausible; but it falls to the ground at once, when the nature of geological time is taken into consideration. The earliest remains of man, including the flint implements in the higher river gravels, pertain to what Lyell terms the post-pliocene period. The huge lizards or saurians of the oolitic period had become extinct countless ages previously. The same may be said, though in a relatively lesser degree, of the huge Dinotherium found in the Upper Miocene formation. Some writers, indeed, who advocate the hypothesis of man's descent by "natural selection" or "evolution," from the lower animals, contend that some antitype of humanity *may* have lived in the Miocene period, but of this we have no evidence. The extinct gigantic animals, found in connection with the oldest known remains of man, are pachyderms, which in no way resemble, either in their habits, or by the most strained metaphor, in their forms, the dragons and serpents of the Aryan mythology or their modern descendants in British history and tradition. The discovery of their bones has undoubtedly had something to do with giants and other monsters of the mythic class, of which more will be said in another chapter.

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTMAS AND YULE-TIDE SUPERSTITIONS AND OBSERVANCES.

Here's merry Christmas come again,
With all it ever used to bring;
The mistletoe and carol strain,
The holly in the window pane,
And all the bloom from hill and plain
That Winter's chilly hand can fling.

. . . . . .

It comes with roar of city bells;
It comes with many a village chime;
And many a village grand-dame tells
Of places where the white ghost dwells,
Of demon forms and robbers' cells,
And all the tales for Christmas time.

Eliza Cook.

If there by any possibility existed a doubt that the religion of the Messiah was one of *love* and not of *gloom*, the sunny side of the argument would be amply vindicated by the fact that, from the earliest Christian times, the anniversary of the advent of the Saviour was always celebrated with becoming social enjoyment. "Merrie Christmas," indeed, in spite of hail and rain, and sleet, and snow, the blustering of old Boreas, and the frigid embrace of "Jack Frost," has passed into a proverb. The mass of the British people, notwithstanding their characteristic constitutional phlegm, contrive to become conspicuously social at Christmas tide. They appear to have been too closely occupied with business affairs during the greater portion of the year to indulge much in the hearty humour and frank good-will which unquestionably form important elements in the national idiosyncrasy. Their habitual taciturnity, however, influenced by some law whose action is diametrically opposed to that which determines the elemental routine, generally *thaws* on the approach of Christmas. It is not too much to say that, at this period of the year, the manly generous side of the English character is seen to most advantage. Under the genial influence of Christmas associations, even stern, plodding "men of business" leave their well-worn official stools and well-thumbed ledgers, and enjoy heartily the

Christmas meal of roast beef and plum pudding in company with their relatives and friends. Nay, at this festive season, we have seen the veriest old "money-grubbers" of the city, the most cool and calculating of the *habitués* of the stock-exchange, dance and frolic, and aid the juveniles of their social circles in the perpetration of practical Christmas jokes, the compounding of "snap-dragon," the fashioning of mistletoe bushes, etc., to the infinite delight of the youngsters and their own evident personal gratification. There is, undoubtedly, a time and a season for all things; and the British public especially appear for ages to have resolved that "Christmas time" is the season for the exercise of grateful memories, for the interchange of social kindness, the propagation of the great principle of progressive civilisation, "peace and good-will to man,"—yes, and likewise, for the temperate indulgence in harmless mirth, and hearty, jovial laughter.

Christmas is the season in which pantomimes flourish. By the bye, who ever heard of a pantomime that was not a "Christmas" one? I am certain I would not myself,—and I feel certain the most boisterous of the young imps who giggle themselves into a frightful condition of side-ache and cheek-ache when witnessing the tricks and jokes, stale or otherwise, of clown and pantaloon, and the perpetually unfortunate policeman, would endorse the sentiment,—I would not walk two streets' length, no, not two yards, to witness the best pantomime in the world on Midsummer's eve! One would as soon think of asking the cook, as a special mark of her personal regard, to give us a turn or two on the spit, accompanied by a copious basting with rancid butter! But it is quite a different affair on Christmas Eve, or "boxing night." The pantomime is, in every sense, unquestionably the property of "dear old Christmas," and then, and then only, can its rollicking fun, farce, fancy, and fairy marvels be thoroughly understood or enjoyed.

Pantomime, among the Greeks and Romans, as well as the Chinese, Persians, and other Oriental peoples, was a dramatic performance, in which action and gesticulation formed the most prominent features. The modern *ballet* is, perhaps, its most legitimate descendant at the present day. The name, however, is derived from two Greek words, which signify mimicry or "imitation of everything." The modern pantomime, therefore, with its universal hash of fun and frolic, of fairies and fiends, deities and dragons, of ghosts, goblins, and giants, of burlesque and ballet, painting and punning, of music and mountebanking, responds most accurately to the classical etymon.

Although the profuse but somewhat indiscriminate hospitality, and some of the ruder of the Christmas games and ceremonies of our mediæval ancestors, have declined or fallen into general disuse, the anniversary of the advent of the founder of the national religion yet remains the chief season set apart especially for genial social intercourse, the gathering together of relatives and friends, the interchange of mutual good-will, and of festive enjoyment.

After discussing the various opinions, facts, and conjectures advanced by others respecting the origin of "yule logs" and Christmas fires, Brand says: "However this may be, I am pretty confident that the yule block will be found, in its first use, to have been only a counterpart of the Midsummer fires, made within doors because of the cold weather at this winter solstice, as those in the hot season at the summer one, are kindled in the open air."

Precisely so; yet, as the Midsummer fires were not kindled for the sake of the warmth they afforded, but as a kind of incantation or a propitiatory sacrifice to the fire god or the elements generally, if the two had a common origin, we may reasonably expect to find a similar principle or motive at the root of the Christmas observances. At the summer solstice the sun's heat parched the earth and burnt the vegetation. Hence the propitiatory ceremony of the fire worshippers. At the winter solstice his feeble rays were insufficient to the requirements of vegetable existence, and the severe cold added to the privations of both and man and beast. Hence the existence of a corresponding sentiment and corresponding ceremonial observances.

Brand further says: "On the night of this eve our ancestors were wont to light up candles of *an uncommon size*, called Christmas candles, and lay a log of wood upon the fire, called a yule-clog or Christmas block, to illuminate the house, and, as it were, turn night into day. This custom is, in some measure, still kept up in the north of England."

The early Christians were, and the learned of more modern times are, divided in opinion as to the precise day of the Nativity. The feast of the Passover and that of the Tabernacles have each found powerful advocates. According to St. Chrysostom, the primitive Christians celebrated the Christmas and Epiphany feasts at one and the same time. They were not separated till the council of Nice, in the year 325. Amongst the Armenians, notwithstanding, the two feasts were jointly celebrated till as recently as the thirteenth century. It has been urged by some that, as shepherds were watching their flocks by night in the open air, the birth of Christ could

scarcely have occurred in the winter season. But so long as one time was accepted by the universal Church, it appeared to be of little moment which theory was adopted. Sir Isaac Newton, in his "Commentary on the Prophecies of Daniel," accounts for the choice of the 25th December on the ground of its being the winter solstice. He shows, likewise, that other feasts were originally fixed at the cardinal points of the year. "The first calendars having been so arranged by mathematicians at pleasure, without any ground in tradition, the Christians afterwards took up what they found in the calendars."

There can be little doubt that this view of the question is correct, and that many of the curious customs and ceremonies, which were for centuries religiously observed throughout the land, and many of which still linger about the holiday celebrations of remote districts, have an origin older than Christianity itself. The most orthodox and exemplary writers of the middle ages acknowledge this, and contend that the practice of the early Christians of appropriating the festive seasons of their heathen converts was productive of good results.

The testimony of Thomas Warmstry, whose now rare tract, entitled "A Vindication of the Solemnity of the Nativity of Christ," was published in 1648, is strongly in favour of this view. He says: "If it doth appeare that the time of this festival doth comply with the time of the heathen's *Saturnalia*, this leaves no charge of impiety upon it; for since things are best cured by their contraries, it was both wisdom and piety in the ancient Christians (whose work it was to convert the heathens from such as well as other superstitions and miscarriages) to vindicate such times from the service of the devill, by appoynting them to the more solemne and especiall service of God. The *blazes* are foolish and vain, not countenanced by the church."

The "blazes" here referred to are evidently the yule logs and immense candles, which the worthy pastor denounces with orthodox precision. "Blazes" and "Pandemonium" are yet synonymous terms, in vulgar mouths, in many parts of Lancashire. Some of the ceremonies of this period, however, meet with his somewhat qualified approval. He says: "*Christmas Karile*s, if they be such as are fit for the time, and of holy and sober composures, and used with Christian sobriety and piety, they are not unlawfull, and may be profitable if they be sung with grace in the heart. *New Yeare's gifts*, if performed without superstition, may be harmless provocations to Christian love and mutuall testimonies thereof to good purpose, and never the worse because the heathens have had them at the like times."

One important attribute of the Yule log resulted from the fact that each succeeding brand received its kindling fire from the remains of its predecessor; hence its supposed supernatural influences. Herrick sings :—

With the last year's brand
Light the new block, and
For good success in his spending,
On your psaltries play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a *teending*.

Etymologists have laboured hard to get at the root of the word Yule ; some of them, however, with but indifferent success. Brand says :—" I have met with no word of which there are so many and such different etymologies as this of Yule, of which there seems nothing certain but that it means Christmas." Some writers, including the venerable Bede, derive it from *hveol*, the Anglo-Saxon form of our modern English word wheel, which, as I have already shown, is one of the Aryan types of the sun. Bede, I think, assigns the true meaning to the term when he says it is so named " because of the return of the sun's annual course, after the winter solstice." According to Mr. Davies (Cel. Res. p. 191), the god Bel or Beli was called Hu. Mallet in his " Northern Antiquities," says :—" All Celtic nations have been accustomed to the worship of the sun; either as distinguished from Thor," (? Bel) "or as considered his symbol. It was a custom that everywhere prevailed in ancient times to celebrate a feast at the winter solstice, by which men testified their joy at seeing this great luminary return again to this part of the heavens. This was the greatest solemnity in the year. They called it in many places *Yole* or *Yuul*, from the word *Hiaul* and *Houl*, which, even at this day, signifies the Sun in the languages of Bass-Britagne and Cornwall."

Brand objects to this etymology, on the ground that it " is giving a Celtic derivation of a Gothic word (two languages extremely different.)" This objection, however, falls to the ground with the discovery of the fact that both languages have a common origin, and that the several races and their superstitions are but separate developments of Aryan blood and Aryan mythology. In modern Welsh *gwyl* means a festival or holiday, and this may be the true root of the word *gule*, in the phrase " the *gule* of August," or Lammas-day. But the Welsh *gwyl* may itself be derived from the same root as *yule*, which, to our ears, now only signifies, as Brand says, " Christmas," or the festive season. *Heulo*, in modern Welsh, means to " shine as

the sun." In India the term *Huli* festival is applied to the ceremonies attendant upon the sun's entering into the spring quarter at the vernal equinox.

In ordinary life we meet with very few persons who are aware of the fact that the practice of regarding the first of January as the commencement of a new year is of very modern origin, in England, at least. Prior to 1752, in most legal or official matters, and in private records, the year commenced on the 25th of March. At this time an Act of Parliament was passed which "directed that the legal year which then commenced in some parts of this country in March, and in others in January, should universally be deemed to begin on the first of January." This will appear to many as a strange species of legislation, savouring somewhat of the vanity and irreverence for which Canute, the great Danish King of England, rebuked his courtiers, when he ironically commanded the tide to cease flowing, lest, forsooth, it should damp his royal shoe-leather. The commencement of the year, as has been before observed, being not a fact in physics, but a conventional or civil arrangement for human convenience, is therefore a legitimate subject for legislative interference, with the view to arrive at a uniformity of style, and so facilitate business operations and the enquiries of historians and students of science.

The practice of celebrating the new year's advent on the first of January appears to have obtained to a considerable extent in England long prior to its legal recognition. The famous Puritan writer, Prynne, in his "Histrio-Mastrix, or a Scourge for Stage Players," published in 1632, has the following slashing tirade against the festive observances of this period:—

"If we now parallel our grand disorderly Christmases with these Roman Saturnals and heathen festivals, or our New Yeare's Day (a chiefe part of Christmas), with their festivity of Janus, which was spent in mummeries, stageplays, dancing, and such like enterludes, wherein fidlers and others acted lascivious effeminate parts, and went about their towns and cities in women's apparel; whence the whole Catholicke Church (as Alchuvinus and others write), appointed a solemn publike faste upon this our New Yeare's day (which fast it seems is now forgotten), to bewail these heathenish enterludes, sports, and lewd idolatrous practices which have been used on it; *prohibiting all Christians, under pain of excommunication, from observing the calends, or first of January (which we now call New Yeare's Day), as holy, and from sending abroad New Yeare's Gifts upon it (a custom now too frequent), it being a mere relique of paganisme and idolatry, derived from the heathen*

Romans' feast of two-faced Janus, and a practice so execrable unto Christians that not only the whole Catholicke Church, but even four famous Councils" [and an enormous quantity of other authorities which it is useless to quote] "have positively *prohibited the solemnization of New Yeare's Day, and the sending abroad of New Yeare's Gifts, under an anathema and excommunication.*"

Although there can be no doubt that the practices referred to were in existence prior to the introduction of Christianity, yet the threat of excommunication and anathema failed to root them out of the heart of the mass of the population, and they survive to the present day. Some of the gifts made to sovereign princes on the advent of the new year were not only valuable, but often quaint in device, and sometimes, according to modern ideas, in singularly bad taste. The accomplished scholar, soldier, and courtier, Sir Philip Sidney, on the New Year's Day of 1578, presented to Queen Elizabeth a "cambric chemise, its sleeves and collar wrought with black work and edged with a small bone lace of gold and silver. With it was a pair of ruffs interlaced with gold and silver, and set with spangles which alone weighed four ounces." His friend Fulke Greville likewise presented an embroidered chemise. On another occasion of a similar character, (1581), "Sidney made three characteristic presents—a gold-handled whip, a golden chain, a heart of gold, as though in token of his entire subservience to her Majesty, and his complete surrender of himself to the royal keeping. On one occasion, the Earl of Ormond presented to the Queen "a golden phœnix, whose wings and feet glittered with rubies and diamonds, and which rested on a branch covered with other precious stones. Sir Christopher Hatton tendered a cross of diamonds, furnished with a suitable motto; also a gold fancy, imaging a dog leading a man over a bridge, and garnished with many gems." Lord and Lady Cobham each presented a satin petticoat elaborately ornamented. Her Majesty, on New Year's Day, it appears, did not disdain to receive presents from her servants and tradesmen. Nichols, in his "Royal Progresses," records that a laundress solicited the Queen's acceptance of three pocket handkerchiefs and a "tooth cloth." One domestic sought favour with a linen and another with a cambric nightcap. Apothecaries presented packets of green ginger, orange candy, and "that kind of stuff." A butler's offering consisted of a meat knife, "with a bone handle and a motto carved thereon," while the dustman tendered "two bolts of cambric," the head gardener a silver-gilt porringer, with a "snail sticking to an oak-leaf for handle," and the "sergeant of the pastry"

a "great quince pie with gilt ornaments." The Queen, in return, presented her courtiers, etc., with "gilt plate, showing her esteem by the quantity of the article" apportioned to each recipient. In his preface Nichols remarks that "the only remains of this custom at court now is that the two chaplains in waiting, on New Year's Day, have each a crown piece laid under their plates at dinner."

Old Thomas Warmstey, as we have seen, held much milder language on this subject than Prynne. He regarded the gifts as "harmless provocations to Christian love, and mutual testimonies thereof to good purpose," notwithstanding their heathen origin. The practice is by no means extinct at the present time. In many towns shopkeepers present their customers, on New Year's Day, with candles, nutmegs, spices, etc., in token of good will.

Brand speaks of an ancient custom, which is yet retained in many places on New Year's Eve: "Young women went about with a Wassail Bowl of spiced ale, with some sort of verses that were sung by them as they went from door to door." This liquor was sometimes called "Lamb's Wool," although it is difficult to conjecture now for what reason. In the "olden time" it appears to have been compounded of ale, sugar, nutmeg, toast, and roasted apples or crabs. The wassail bowl originally meant a health-drinking vessel, and is of very ancient origin. The name is derived from two Anglo-Saxon words *wæs hæl*, which signify "be in health," "wax (grow) in health," or in modern phrase, "good health."

Geoffrey of Monmouth refers to the Saxon practice of health drinking on important occasions, when describing the visit of the British King Vortigern to the palace of Hengist, the chieftain of the Teutonic warriors then recently arrived in Britain. During the banquet, Rowena, the beautiful daughter of Hengist, "came out of her chamber bearing a golden cup of wine, with which she approached the King, and making a low courtsey, said to him, 'Lanerd' (lord) 'King, wacht heil!' The King, at the sight of the lady's face, was on a sudden both surprised and inflamed with her beauty, and, calling to his interpreter, asked him what she said, and what answer he should make her. 'She called you *Lord King*,' said the interpreter, 'and offered to drink your health. Your answer to her must be, '*Drinc heil!*' Vortigern accordingly answered 'Drinc heil!' and bade her drink; after which he took the cup from her hand, kissed her, and drank himself. From that time to this it has been the custom in Britain, that he who drinks to anyone says 'Wacht heil!' and he that pledges him answers '*Drinc heil?*'"

In process of time, the practice of drinking healths on solemn or festive occasions was confounded with ordinary tippling, and the term wassail became applied indiscriminately to all festive intemperance. Hamlet says, speaking of the drinking habits of the usurper, Claudius—

> The King doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse,
> Keeps wassel and the swaggering up-spring reels;
> And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
> The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
> The triumph of his pledge.

The Antiquarian Repertory (1775) contains a rude wood-cut of a bowl carved on an oaken beam, which had formed a portion of an ancient chimney recess. The vessel rests on the branches of an apple tree, alluding perhaps, Sir Henry Ellis suggests, to "part of the materials of which the liquor was composed." On one side the word *Wass-heil* is inscribed, and on the other *Drinc-heile*. A commentator on this relic informs us that it represents a Wassel Bowl, so beloved of yore by our hardy ancestors, "who, on the vigil of the New Year, never failed to assemble round the glowing hearth with their cheerful neighbours, and then, in the spicy Wassel Bowl (which testified the goodness of their hearts) drowned every former animosity — an example worthy of modern imitation. *Wassel* was the word, Wassel every guest returned, as he took the circling goblet from his friend, whilst song and civil mirth brought in the infant year."

A work entitled "Naogeorgus," but generally styled the "Popish Kingdom," published in 1570, and translated by Barnabe Googe, thus refers to the New Year's Day ceremonies of the time :—

> The next to this is New Yeare's Day, whereon to every frende
> They costly presents in do bring, and Newe Yeare's giftes do sende;
> These giftes the husband gives his wife, and father eke the child,
> And maister on his men bestowes the like with favour milde;
> And good beginning of the yeare they wishe and wishe againe,
> According to the auncient guise of heathen people vaine.
> These eight days no man doth require his dettes of any man,
> Their tables do they furnish out with all the meate they can;
> With march paynes, tartes, and custards great, they drink with staring eyes,
> They rowte and revell, feede and feaste, as merry all as pyes;
> As if they should at th' entrance of this New Yeare hap to die,
> Yet would they have their bellies full, and auncient friends allie.

I remember, very recently, at the conclusion of a public jubilee dinner, within a very few miles from Manchester, one of the guests suddenly died of apoplexy. This sad event, of course, caused the adjournment of the festive gathering. The reason I refer to it here is

merely to state that I heard, to my surprise, one of the country visitors say, in a very consolatory tone, "Well, poor Joe, God rest his soul! He has, at least, gone to his long rest wi' a bally full o' good me-at, and that's some consolation." This seems to illustrate the meaning of the last couplet in the quotation from "Naogeorgus," the sentiment in which appears to have some affinity to the Greek and Roman notions of providing the dead with food and money to aid their passage across the Styx.

The Rev. S. Baring-Gould, in his "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," says "it is a singular fact that only the other day I heard of a man in Cleveland (Yorkshire) being buried two years ago with a candle, a penny, and a bottle of wine in his coffin: the candle to light him along the road, the penny to pay the ferry, and the wine to nourish him as he went to the New Jerusalem. I was told this, and this explanation was given to me by some rustics who professed to have attended the funeral. This looks to me as though the shipping into the other land were not regarded merely as a figure of speech, but as a reality."

One writer says the "high feast of Yule lasted until the twelve days be passed," and consequently included our new year and twelfth night festivities. During this period a strong superstition yet obtains in Lancashire and Yorkshire respecting fire. A singular instance of this recently occurred to a friend of mine within three miles of Manchester. Seeing a cottage door open, he entered, and asked the good woman of the house to give him a light for his cigar. He was somewhat astonished at her inhospitable response: "Nay, nay, I know better than that." "Better than what?" he inquired. "Why, better than give a light out of the house on New Year's Day!" He contrived, notwithstanding, to ignite his cigar without the woman's assistance, and she seemed content. She had forgotten the best half of the condition, however, and committed the very blunder she sought to avoid. According to Sir Henry Ellis, in the North of England the superstition ordains that you "never allow any to take a light out of your house on New Year's Day; a death in the household, before the expiration of a year, is sure to occur if it be allowed."

Sir Henry Ellis likewise mentions a curious superstition still existing in Lincolnshire. It is considered unlucky to let anything be taken out of the house on New Year's Day, before something has been brought into it. The importation of the most insignificant article, even a piece of coal, is, it appears, sufficient to prevent the misfortunes occuring, which the contrary action, it is believed, would render

inevitable during some portion of the year. This sentiment is expressed in the following popular rhyme :—

Take out, then take in,
Bad luck will begin ;
Take in, then take out,
Good luck comes about.

A remarkable instance of the strength of the superstitious reverence for this day, or rather of the popular belief in the prophetic character of any incident occurring thereon, recently happened in Manchester. A publican, name Tilley, refused to serve a glass of whisky *on credit* during the New Year's Day's festivities, on the score that it was "unlucky" so to do. He said he preferred making the man a present of the liquor to the committal of any such act. The refusal so exasperated the thirsty customer that he stabbed the landlord in the abdomen, and, as the wound proved fatal, he was condemned to death for wilful murder, but the sentence was afterwards commuted to penal servitude for life. Thus the faith in the tradition produced a more tragic result than the most superstitious could have dreaded from its ignoration. Singularly enough, owing to the first day of the year happening on Sunday, the usual festival was postponed till the following day ; so it appears in this instance the superstition accompanied the merry-making without reference to the date.

This practice of "bringing in the New Year" with festive rejoicing is still a very common one, especially in the north of England. A singular superstition in connection with it is evidently of very ancient origin. It is considered to be an unlucky omen if the first person who enters a house on the morning of the first of January happens to be a female.

Another unlucky omen is yet very commonly respected in Lancashire and elsewhere, even amongst comparatively educated people, at this festive season. It is considered to bode misfortune if the first person who enters your house on New Year's morning has a fair complexion and light hair. I have never heard this very popular prejudice satisfactorily accounted for. I can only suggest that it most probably arose from the fact that amongst the Keltic tribes, or the earliest Aryan immigrants, dark hair prevailed, as amongst the Welsh, Cornish, and Irish of the present day ; and that when they afterwards came in contact with the Teutonic branch, as enemies, they found their mortal foes to possess fair skins and light hair. They consequently regarded the intrusion into their household, at the commencement of the year, of one of the hated race, as a sinister omen. The

beards and hair of the ancient Aryan gods were golden or red, or fire-coloured. The Teutonic Thor, in this respect, was the counterpart of Indra and Agni. Red hair, no doubt, would have its admirers, where these gods were worshipped; and, of course, it would fall into contempt when the reverse was the case. The German early Christians, it appears, not only condemned Thor to the lower regions, but carried their dislike to the very colour of his hair. Hence the proverb, "Rother-bart, Teufelsart," or "Red-beard, devil-steered." They went so far, indeed, as to assert, without any other authority than the speciality of his personal character, that the beard of the arch-traitor, Judas Iscariot, was of this obnoxious colour. Dryden refers to it in the triplet which he despatched to Jacob Tonson, as a specimen of his power as a satirist, and which caused the celebrated publisher to deal more liberally than previously with the poor and angry poet. Dryden's lines are:

> With leering look, bull-faced, and freckled fair,
> With two left legs, with *Judas*-coloured hair,
> And frowsy pores that taint the ambient air.

Kelly says the prejudice is of German and not of Eastern origin. Hence it is not improbable that the dethronement of the red-haired gods may have been at the root of the German antipathy. But the true Kelt does not simply abhor, on New Year's Day, the red hair of the Dane, but the brown or flaxen, or amber locks of the German as well. Indeed, black or dark hair and complexion are the chief objects of his concern in the individual who first enters his domicile on the dawn of the New Year.* Many householders feast their friends on New Year's Eve, and send out shortly before midnight one of the party, with dark hair, expressly "to bring in the New Year," as it is termed. I remember, some time ago, the landlady of one of the Preston hotels, being unmarried, was in the habit of rewarding the fortunate dark-haired gentleman with a kiss for his propitious entrance into her hostelry on the morning of this festivity. Of course, the fair one had nothing but frowns and harsh words if a light-haired interloper happened to first cross her threshold.

Mr. T. T. Wilkinson, in his "Popular Customs and Superstitions in Lancashire," referring to the practice of divination at this season of the year, says:—"When a Lancashire damsel desires to know

* Since the above was written, I have learned that, in some localities, light-haired men are preferred. This superstition may, therefore, perhaps, arise, as I have suggested, from prejudice of race, and equally apply to Teuton and Kelt, and, consequently, subject to local modification.

what sort of a husband she will have, on New Year's Eve she pours some melted lead into a glass of water and observes what forms the drops assume. When they resemble scissors, she concludes that she must rest satisfied with a tailor; if they appear in the form of a hammer, he will be a smith or a carpenter; and so of the others. I have met with many instances of this class in which the example given did not admit of easy contradiction."

The prophetic character of the weather during this period is a superstition common to all the Aryan tribes. So strongly is this characteristic of the season felt in Lancashire, at the present day, that many country people may be met with who habitually found their "forecast," as the late Admiral Fitzroy would term the operation, on the appearance of the heavens on Old Christmas Day. Mr. T. T. Wilkinson relates a singular instance of this superstition, which shows the stubbornness of traditional lore, even when subjected to the power and influence of legislative enactments. He says:—"The *use* of the *old style* in effect is not yet extinct in Lancashire. The writer knows an old man, R. H., of Habergham, about 77 years of age, who always reckons the changes of the seasons in this manner. He alleges the practice of his grandfather and father in support of his method, and states with much confidence that 'Perliment didn't change t' seasons wen they chang'd day o' t' month.'"

The New Year's advent is still believed to be a period especially favourable for divination of various kinds. A work named the "Shepherd's Kalender," published in 1709, soberly informs us that "if New Year's Day in the morning open with dusky red clouds, it denotes strifes and debates among great ones, and many robberies to happen that year."

The "weatherwise" placed much reliance on the prophetic aspect of the heavens at this period. A clergyman at Kirkmichæl, quoted by Sir John Sinclair, says, with reference to the practices of some of his parishioners,—"On the first night of January they observe with anxious attention the disposition of the atmosphere. As it is calm or boisterous; as the wind blows from the north or the south, from the east or the west, they prognosticate the nature of the weather till the conclusion of the year. The first night of the new year when the wind blows from the west they call *dar-na-coille*, the night of the fecundation of the trees; and from the circumstance has been derived the name in the Gælic language. Their faith in the above signs is couched in verses thus translated:—'The wind of the south will produce heat and fertility; the wind of the west milk and fish; the

wind of the north cold and storm; the wind from the east fruit on the trees.'"

A curious custom of this class is mentioned by Sir Henry Ellis, termed "Apple-howling," as being well known in Sussex, Devon, and elsewhere. Troops of boys gather round the orchards on New Year's Eve, and chant the following ditty:—

Stand fast root, bear well top,
Pray God send us a howling crop;
Every twig, apples big;
Every bough, apples enow;
Hats full, caps full,
Full quarter sacks full.

The practice of divining or "forecasting" the character of the weather, and influencing the vegetation of the coming year, by ceremonies and observations of atmospheric effects, at its commencement, or on New Year's Day, appears to be prefigured in the ancient Aryan mythology. On this subject Walter Kelly says:—"In the gloomy season of the winter solstice the Ribhus" (demi-gods, who aid in the ruling of the lightning and storms) "sleep for twelve days in the house of the sun-god Savitar; then they wake up and prepare the earth to clothe itself anew with vegetation, and the frozen waters to flow again. It appears certain, from some passages in the Vedas, that twelve nights about the winter solstice were regarded as prefiguring the character of the weather for the whole year. A Sanscrit text is noticed by Weber, which says expressly, 'The twelve nights are an image of the year.' The very same belief exists at this day in Northern Germany. The peasants say that the calendar for the whole year is made in the twelve days between Christmas and Epiphany, and that as the weather is on each of these days so will it be on the corresponding month of the ensuing year. They believe also that whatever one dreams on any of the twelve nights will come to pass within the next year."

Before the introduction of the New Style, previously referred to, this weather fore-casting was indulged in at the end of March. Brand gives an old rhyme which demonstrates the truth of this:

March said to Aperill,
I see three hogs upon a hill;
But lend your first three days to me,
And I'll be bound to gar them dee.
The first it sall be wind an' weet,
The next it sall be snaw an' sleet,
The third it sall be sic a freeze,
Sall gar the birds stick to the trees.
But when the borrowed days were gane,
The three silly hogs came hirplin hame.

Mr. Henderson, in his recent work on the "Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties," says, "Old people presage the weather of the coming season by that of the last three days of March, which they call the 'borrowing days,' and thus rhyme about:

March borrowed from April
Three days, and they were ill;
The first o' them war wind an' weet,
The next o' them war snaw an' sleet,
The last o' them war wind an' rain,
Which gaed the silly pair ewes come toddling hame.

The mistletoe and the oak were both of sacred, or "lightning" origin amongst the Aryans, and the medicinal, mythical, or magical character yet attributed to the former both by the Teutons and Kelts, had, doubtless, one common origin. Walter Kelly says the mistletoe "possesses, in a high degree, all the virtues proper to botanic lightning, as is implied in its Swiss name, *donnerbesen*, 'thunderbesom,' and its mode of growth is conformable in all particulars to its exalted mythical character. It is a parasite, and like the asvattha and the rowan, it is everywhere believed to spring from seed deposited by birds on trees. When it was found on the oak, the Druids ascribed its growth directly to the gods; they *chose* the tree; and the bird was their messenger, perhaps a god in disguise." The mistletoe was supposed to protect the homestead from fire and other disaster; and, like many other mysterious things, it was believed to be potent in matters relating to courtship and matrimony. It is to this sentiment we owe the practice of kissing under the bush formed of holly and mistletoe during the Christmas festivities.

This matrimonial element in the mysticism which attaches to the mistletoe is artistically presented in the Scandinavian mythology. Freyja, the mother of Baldr, had rendered him invulnerable against all things formed out of the then presumed four elements, fire, air, earth, and water. The mistletoe was believed to grow from none of these elements. Another version is that she swore all created things never to hurt this the "whitest" and most loved of all the Œsir; but she overlooked one insignificant branch of the mistletoe, and it was by an arrow fashioned from it that the bright day-god, Baldr, the Scandinavian counterpart of Apollo and Bel, was killed by the blind Hodr or Helder. The gods, however, restored him to life, and dedicated the mistletoe to his mother, who is regarded as the counterpart of the classical Venus. Hence its importance in affairs of love and courtship. It is not improbable that the far-famed dart of Cupid may have some relationship to the mistletoe arrow to which the beautiful Baldr succumbed. In a Vedic incantation, translated by Dr.

Kuhn, this death-dealing power of the mistletoe is ascribed to a branch of the *asvattha*.

The medicinal qualities of the mistletoe were also in high repute. "This healing virtue, which the mistletoe shares with the ash," says Kelly, "is a long-descended tradition, for '*the kustha the embodiment of the soma*,' a healing plant of the highest renown among the Southern Aryans, was one of those that grew beneath the heavenly asvattha." This heavenly asvattha is the *ficus religiosa*, or "world tree," "out of which the immortals shaped the heavens and the earth;" and it is supposed to be the prototype of the yggdrasil, the cloud-tree of the Norsemen, "an ash (Norse *askr*), the tree out of which the gods formed the first man, who was thence called Askr. The ash was also among the Greeks, an image of the clouds, and the mother of men." The Christmas tree of the Germans, recently imported into this country, no doubt originated in these ancient mythical superstitions.

The wide-spread traditionary belief in this world-overspreading tree is confirmed by a passage in Merlin's celebrated prophecy. The magician says, "After this shall be produced a tree upon the Tower of London, which, having no more than three branches, shall overshadow the surface of the whole island." Of course Merlin is speaking figuratively of the future prospects of Britain, and refers to the domination of London as the metropolitan city of the British empire. Nevertheless, the origin of the mythical language used for this purpose appears to admit of no doubt.

The famous beanstalk up which the renowned "Jack," of nursery story, climbed till he reached cloud-land, the abode of fairies and giants, is, unquestionably, a remnant of the Scandinavian yggdrasil, or cloud-tree. Beans and peas, as will be hereafter shown, in the Aryan myths, were connected with celestial fire, and with departed spirits. This Gothic skiey realm has likewise its counterpart in the Greek Phæakian domain, or "cloudland geography," as Mr. Cox aptly expresses it.

A certain reverence for both the oak and the ash exists yet in the minds of others better educated than the peasantry of England. The phrase, "Our hearts of oak," may shortly be superseded by "Our iron-clads," but the figure of speech, as applied to the fighting sailor, and not to the craft, will long survive the era of the conversion of the ships. The oak and the ash are weather-prophets at this day. An old rhyme says:—

If the oak's before the ash,
We shall only get a splash;
If the ash precede the oak,
We shall surely get a soak.

This, of course, refers to the priority in the time of budding or coming into leaf.

Other Christmas customs and superstitions appear to distinctly exhibit an Aryan origin. The white-thorn is supposed to possess supernatural power, and certain trees of this class, in Lancashire called Christmas thorns, are believed to blossom only on Old Christmas Day. Mr. Wilkinson says that, in the neighbourhood of Burnley, many persons will yet travel a considerable distance "at midnight, in order to witness the blossoming." In the Arboretum at Kew gardens, Miss Pratt informs us, in her "Flowers, and their Associations," there is a tree of this kind which "is often covered with its clusters while the snow surrounds it." The thorn, as I shall afterwards show, was an Aryan "lightning plant," and, therefore, supposed to be endowed with supernatural properties.

The boar's head yet forms a prominent object amongst the traditionary dishes of Christmas festivities. Amongst the impersonations of natural phenomena in the Aryan mythology, the wild boar represented the "ravages of the whirlwind that tore up the earth." The boar is an animal connected with the storm and lightning, in all the Indo-European mythologies. Kelly says:—"Boars are winds, and their white flashing tusks were looked upon by the southern Aryans and the Greeks, as well as by the Germans, as images of the lightning." There exists yet a traditionary superstition very prevalent in Lancashire and its neighbourhood to the effect that pigs can "*see the wind.*" I accidentally heard the observation made not long ago, in the city of Manchester, in what is termed "respectable society," and no one present audibly dissented. One or two individuals, indeed, remarked that they had often heard such was the case, and seemed to regard the phenomenon as related to the strong scent and other instincts peculiar to animals of the chase. Indeed, Dr. Kuhn says that in Westphalia this phase of the superstition is the prevalent one. There pigs are said to smell the wind. No one except myself, in the Manchester instance referred to, appeared to have any knowledge of the origin of the tradition, or that it was, *at least*, between three and four thousand years old, and, in all probability, very much older.

CHAPTER IV.

EASTER SUPERSTITIONS AND CEREMONIES.

GENTLE SPRING! in sunshine clad,
Well do'st thou thy power display!
For Winter maketh the light heart sad,
And thou, thou maketh the sad heart gay!
He sees thee, and calls to his gloomy train,
The sleet, and the snow, and the wind, and the rain,
And they shrink away, and they flee in fear,
When thy merry step draws near.

Winter giveth the fields and trees, so old,
Their beards of icicles and snow;
And the rain, it raineth so fast and cold,
We must cower over the embers low;
And snugly housed from the wind and weather,
Mope like birds that are changing feather;
But storm retires, and the sky grows clear,
When thy merry step draws near.

Translation by Longfellow from the French of Charles D'Orleans, XV. century.

Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice steal in and out,
As if they feared the light:
And, oh! she dances such a way,
No sun upon an Easter day
Is half so fine a sight.

Sir John Suckling.

MANY scarcely yet obsolete ceremonies and superstitions peculiar to the spring time of the year may likewise be traced to the ancient fire or sun worship, and other Aryan sources. That the sun rose on Easter-day, and danced with delight in honour of the resurrection of Christ, is evidently an ancient superstition engrafted on an orthodox Christian tenet. This sun-dancing belief is thus rebuked in the "Athenian Oracle":—

"Why does the sun at his rising play more on Easter-day than Whitsunday? The matter of fact is an old weak, superstitious error, and the sun neither plays nor works on Easter-day more than any other. It's true, it may sometimes happen to shine brighter that morning than any other; but, if it does, 'tis purely accidental. In some parts of England they call it the lamb-playing, which they look

for, as soon as the sun rises, in some clear spring or water, and is nothing but the pretty reflection it makes from the water, which they may find at any time, if the sun rises clear and they themselves early, and unprejudiced with fancy."

Sir Thomas Browne, referring to this subject, says:—"We shall not, I hope, disparage the Resurrection of our Redeemer if we say that the sun doth not dance on Easter-day; and though we would willingly assent to any sympathetical exultation, yet we cannot conceive therein any more than a tropical expression."

These extracts are sufficient to show the "toughness" of the traditionary belief, and that its probable origin is of an earlier date than the Christian festivities of Easter. Some derive the term Easter from the Saxon Oster, to rise; others "from one of the Saxon goddesses, called Eastre, whom they always worshipped at this season." Others, again, prefer the Anglo-Saxon root, signifying a storm, "the time of Easter being subject to the continual recurrence of tempestuous weather."

The procuring of original or "need-fire," from flint and steel at this season, has been previously referred to. At Reading, in 1559, it appears by the churchwardens' account, yet extant, that 5s. 8d. was "paid for makynge of the Paschall and Funte Taper." Two years previously, one made for the abbey church of Westminster weighed three hundred pounds!

A quaint old writer, in a work called "The Festival," published in 1511, referring to these "need-fires," says:—"This day is called, in many places, Godde's Sondaye: ye knowe well that it is the maner at this day to do the fyre out of the hall, and the blacke wynter brandes, and all thyngs that is foule with fume and smoke shall be done awaye, and there the fyre was shall be gayly arayed with fayre floures, and strewed with grene rysshes all aboute."

The coloured eggs thrown into the air or knocked against each other, at Easter, by adults as well as children, are, doubtless, remnants of the Aryan myth, which typified the renovated sun of the spring season by a red or golden egg. Schwartz says it was a custom among the Parsees to distribute red eggs at their spring festival. De Gebelin, in his "Religious History of the Calendar," traces this Easter custom to the ancient Egyptians, Persians, Gauls, Greeks, Romans, and others, "amongst all of whom an egg was an emblem of the universe, the work of the Supreme Divinity." In the nursery tale of "Jack and the Bean-stalk," evidently descended from an Aryan source, one of the hero's feats is the abduction from the giant's

castle in "cloudland" of the hen that, at the bidding of its owner, laid golden eggs.

Brand says:—"Belithus, a ritualist of ancient times, tells us that it was customary in some churches for the bishops and archbishops themselves to play with the inferior clergy at *hand-ball*, and this, as Durand asserts, even on Easter-day itself. Why they should play at hand-ball at this time, rather than any other game, Bourne tells us he has not been able to discover; certain it is, however, that the present custom of playing at that game on Easter holidays for a tansy-cake has been derived from thence. Erasmus, speaking of the proverb, *Mea est pila*, that is, 'I got the ball,' tells us that it signifies 'I've obtained the victory; I am master of my wishes.'"

Brand seems to have hit upon the most probable origin of this ball-playing, which appears to be but another form of the Easter egg-throwing; but, in consequence of his non-acquaintance with the Sanscrit writings and the common Aryan origin of the greater portion of the modern European populations, he sets it forth with great diffidence. He says:—"It would, perhaps, be indulging fancy too far to suppose that the bishops and governors of the churches, who used to play at hand-ball at this season, did it *in a mystical way*, and with reference to the *triumphal joy of the season*."

Mysteries, moralities, or miracle plays were performed at Easter, either by, or with the sanction of, the ecclesiastical authorities. In the "Sleaford-Gild Account Book" there is an entry, under the date 1480, as follows:—"Payd for the Ryitiuall of ye play for the Ascencion, and the wrytyng of spechys, and payntyng of a garment for God, iij. *s.* viij. *d.*"

In the Red Book of the Corporation of Kilkenny there is an entry at Midsummer, in 1586, which states that one Richard Cogan played the part of Christ. His fee for the performance is not stated, but Henry Moore received eightpence for acting the Devil, while the Kilkenny baker was only rewarded with sixpence for personating the Archangel Michael.

Similar observances obtained until recently at other spring festivals, all having, doubtless, a common origin.* They evidently refer to the

* The hawthorn, as will be shown in the following chapter, was invested with much superstitious reverence, and especially in connection with the spring festivals; and, singularly enough, Mr. John Ingram, in his delightful "Flora Symbolica," informs us that the hawthorn is, in "florigraphy," an emblem of Hope. This is, evidently, no accidental coincidence.

increasing power of the sun, the passing away of the winter storms, and the joy of the people at the prospect of an abundant supply of the products of the earth. Reginald Scot, in his "Discovery of Witchcraft," published in 1584, says:—

"In some countries they run out of the doors in time of tempest, blessing themselves with a cheese" (another sun emblem, owing to its form), "whereupon was a cross made with a rope's end, upon Ascension Day.—Item, to hang an egg, laid on Ascension Day, in the roof of the house, preserveth the same from all hurts."

During the last thirty or forty years two Easter customs seem to have declined rapidly in Lancashire and the North of England. Many *troupes* of boys, and, in some instances, grown-up persons, not very long ago, decorated themselves with ribbons, or party-coloured paper in the most fantastic style, and sallied forth during Easter week "a pace-egging," as it was termed. One of their number rejoiced in the euphonious cognomen of "Tosspot." His face was blacked with soot, and he carried a basket on his arm for the purpose of receiving contributions in the shape of "pace" or "Paschall" eggs. Of course, the sovereign substitute for all commercial articles, current coin of the realm, was equally acceptable to the dingy and somewhat diabolical-looking treasurer; for the said "Tosspot" bore remarkable resemblance, both in complexion and some other characteristics, to the "Old Nick" of the Norsemen. These "pace-egging" gentry generally wore wooden swords, with which rival *troupes*, meeting in the streets, occasionally entered into mimic combat that was not always bloodless in its result. The *troupe* sometimes played a kind of rude drama, in which I remember a certain knight having mortally wounded an enemy, vociferously called out for a "doctor," offering the sum of ten pounds as a special fee for his immediate appearance. Others sang some barbarous rhymes, evidently modern versions of older strains, in which Lords Nelson and Collingwood figured conspicuously. I remember well, in my younger days, having taken a part in more than one of these performances at Preston. In the neighbourhood of Blackburn, men, with blackened faces, dressed in the skins of animals and otherwise disfigured, paraded the streets and lanes on these occasions, and, I suppose, obtained much "pace-egg" money, from the terror they inspired. It is not very many years ago since I met a *troupe* of this class in the village of Walton-le-dale, near Preston, that levied its "black-mail" with considerable success.

I am inclined to think that the mummery practised at Easter, in Lancashire, resulted merely from the transfer of the May-day games,

the orgies of the "Lord of Misrule," the "hobby-horse," the Morris dancers, &c., to this festival. The time of holding of holidays, and the character of the amusements, vary in different localities, and they are not unfrequently blended one with another, when the original purport of each has ceased to be remembered or regarded in the light of a religious festival. The May-day mummeries in London, in Brand's days, and even yet, appear to have borne some resemblance to the Lancashire Easter performances. He says:—

"The young chimney sweepers, some of whom are fantastically dressed in girls' clothes, with a great profusion of brick-dust, by way of paint, gilt paper, &c., making a noise with their shovels and brushes, are now the most striking object in the celebration of May-day in the streets of London."

The obtaining of alms, or rather "largesses," as they would term it in "the olden time," appears to have been the chief object of both parties. Indeed, this element in the performance it appears was not confined to the sweeps of London or the "Tosspots" of Lancashire, for Brand further observes:—

"I remember, too, that in walking that same morning, between Houndslow and Brentford, I was met by two distinct parties of *girls*, with garlands of flowers, who begged money of me, saying, 'Pray, sir, remember the garland.'"

The other custom referred to consisted in the "lifting" of women by men on Easter Monday, and the indulgence in a similar freak, on the following day, by the fair sex, on their masculine friends, by way of retaliation. It was commonly performed in the public streets, and caused much amusement; but it was a rude and indelicate piece of practical joking, which can very well be dispensed with, notwithstanding the faith of some that the practice was originally intended to typify the Resurrection of Christ.

Bayard Taylor, in his "Byeways of Europe," gives an interesting account of Andorra, a little republic situated in the heart of the Pyrenees, between France and Spain. This secluded state has enjoyed an independent existence since the days of Charlemagne, and the manners and customs of its inhabitants are of the most simple and primitive character. Mr. Taylor refers to a singular custom that obtains amongst them, and which bears some resemblance to the Lancashire one just referred to. He says, "Before Easter, the unmarried people make bets, which are won by whoever, on Easter morning, can first catch the other and cry out, 'It is Easter, the eggs are mine!' Tricks, falsehoods, and deceptions of all

kinds are permitted; the young man may even surprise the maiden in bed, if he can succeed in doing so. Afterwards they all assemble in public, relate their tricks, eat their Easter eggs, and finish the day with songs and dances."

Cakes and buns are baked at this season, which are supposed to possess supernatural properties. Sir Henry Ellis says, "It is an old belief that the observance of the custom of eating buns on Good Friday protects the house from fire, and several other virtues are attributed to these buns."

In "Poor Robin's Almanack" for 1733, is the following:—

> Good Friday comes this month, the old woman runs
> With one or two a penny hot-cross buns,
> Whose virtue is, if you believe what's said,
> They'll not grow mouldy like the common bread.

The baking of cross-buns at Easter is evidently but a legitimate descendant of the cake baking of the olden festivities. Some consider the cross on the buns as an addition since the introduction of Christianity; others think it may be the remains of an older observance. Dr. Kuhn, speaking of the crosses on ancient boundary and bridal oaks, says an oak formerly grew in a wood near Dahle, around which newly-married couples danced three times, and afterwards cut a cross on it. This cross, he contends, originally represented "Thor's hammer, the consecrator of marriage." The latter was unquestionably one form of the many phallic symbols. Mr. Baring-Gould notices the prohibitions issued at various times against the carrying about of ploughs and ships, especially on Shrove Tuesday, because they were phallic symbols. A writer in the *Quarterly Magazine*, although he considers the planting of the old boundary oak as a Saxon institution, yet regards the placing of the cross thereon as a withdrawal of the tree "from the dominion of Thor or Odin." Kelly, in reply to this, says:—"More or less it did so in Christian times, but previously to then the cross as well as the tree may have belonged to Thor." The cross, in some of its varied forms, has evidently been used as a mythical type from the earliest period of traditional history. I remember, only a very few years ago, when on a visit to Brampton, in Cumberland, being shown, in the neighbourhood, the locality on which one of these ancient marriage oaks had grown for ages. It had only recently been cut down, to the chagrin of many of the neighbouring inhabitants.

A writer in "*Once a Week*," referring to this subject, says, "Do our Ritualists eat hot cross-buns on Good Friday? Perhaps they

do not, but consider the consumption of such cakes to be a weak concession to the childish appetites of those who would not duly observe their Lenten fastings; and who, had they lived in the days of George III., would have been among the crowds who clustered beneath the wooden porticos of the two "royal," and rival, bun-houses at Chelsea. But there is the cross-mark on the surface of the bun to commend it to the minds which are favourably disposed to symbolism; and there is the history of the cross-bun itself, which goes back to the time of Cecrops, and to the *liba* offered to Astarte, and to the Jewish passover cakes, and to the eucharistic bread, or cross-marked wafers, mentioned in St. Chrysostom's Liturgy, and thence adopted by the early Christians. So that the Good Friday bun has antiquity and tradition to recommend it; and, indeed, its very name of *bun* is but the oblique *boun*, from *bous*, the sacred ox, the semblance of whose horns was stamped upon the cake. There, too, they also did duty for the horns of Astarte, in which word some philologists would affect to trace a connection with Easter. The substitution by the Greeks of the cross-mark in place of the horn-mark would seem to have chiefly been for the easier division of the round bun into four equal parts. Such cross-marked buns were found at Herculaneum."

The "simnels" eaten on Mid-Lent, or "Mothering" Sunday, are, doubtless, but modern representatives of the ancient festive cake. On Simnel Sunday young persons especially visit their aged parents, and make them presents of various kinds, but chiefly of rich cakes. It is said by some to have been originally called "Mothering Sunday" from a practice which formerly prevailed of visiting the mother church or cathedral, for the purpose of making Easter or Lenten offerings.

The word "simnel" has given rise to much discussion amongst etymologists. It is variously spelled *simnell*, *symnel*, or, in Lancashire especially, *simbling*. It is not improbable that it possesses some relationship to the Anglo-Saxon *symel* or *symbel*, a feast. Bailey and Dr. Cowell derive it from the Latin *simila*, fine flour. The popular notion is that the father of Lambert Simnel, the pretender to the throne in the reign of Henry VII., was a famous baker of these cakes, and that they retain his name in consequence of his great reputation in confectionery art. This, however, cannot be correct, as simnels are referred to long before his time. It is far more probable that the trade gave the name to the man, as in the cases of smith, baker, tailor, glover, etc. These cakes, like brides'-cakes, are generally profusely decorated.

It is not improbable that the name "simnel" was in Saxon times employed to designate a finer or superior kind of bread or cake. It occurs in the "Lay of Havelock the Dane," a French romance, abridged by Geoffroi Gaimer, the Anglo-Norman trouvère. This "Le Lai de Aveloc," Professor Morley says, belongs to the first half of the twelfth century. He considers it to have been founded on "an English tradition that must have been extant in Anglo-Saxon times, for Gaimer speaks of it as an ancient story." The lay says that when the fisherman Grim, the founder of the town of Grimsby, "caught the great lampery, he carried it to Lincoln, and brought home wastels, *simnels*, his bags full of meal and corn, neats' flesh, sheep and swine's flesh, and hemp for the making of more lines."

Since the above was written, the following paragraph on this subject appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*:—

"Simnel Cakes.—A well-known Lancashire antiquary some time since stated that this term 'originally meant the *very finest* bread, *Pain demain* is another term for it, on account of its having been used as *Sunday bread*' (if a conjecture may be hazarded, it is possible there may be some connexion with the shew bread and heathen votive offerings, as in India and China) 'at the Sacrament. The name appears in Mediæval Latin as *simanellus*, and may thus have been derived from the Latin *simila*—fine flour. In Wright's 'Vocabularies' it appears thus:—'*Hic artocopus—symnelle.*' This form was in use during the fifteenth century. In the 'Dictionarius' of John de Garlande, compiled at Paris in the thirteenth century, it appears thus:—'*Simeneus—placentæ*—simnels.' Such cakes were stamped with the figure of Christ or of the Virgin.' Is it not a little singular that this custom of making these cakes, and also the practice of assembling in one place to eat them, should be confined to Bury? Such is the fact. No other town or district in the United Kingdom is known to keep up such a custom.* As stated above, much labour has been expended to trace its origin, but without success."†

* This is an error. Bury is certainly famous for its simnels, but other towns in Lancashire, and elsewhere, both keep up the custom and boast of the quality of their confectionery.

† The harshness and general painfulness of life in old times must have been much relieved by certain simple and affectionate customs which modern people have learned to dispense with. Amongst these was a practice of going to see parents, and especially the female one, on the mid Sunday of Lent, taking for them some little present, such as a cake or a trinket. A youth engaged in this amiable act of duty was said to go *a-mothering*, and thence the day itself came to be called Mothering Sunday. One can readily imagine how, after a stripling or maiden had gone to service, or launched in

Mid-Lent Sunday is likewise called Braggat or Braggot Sunday, from the custom of drinking "mulled" or spiced ale on that day. The word is believed to be derived from the ancient British *bragawd*, which signifies a liquor of this class. The Braggat ales drunk on Braggat Sunday have, no doubt, intimate connection with the buns and cake of the other spring festivities. The solid and fluid elements, in some form or other, appear to be indispensible in all festive gatherings, religious or otherwise. Bacchus and Ceres, or Dionysos and Dêmetêr, were jointly honoured at the festivals attendant upon the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries. Shakspere makes Sir Toby Belch exclaim, on Malvolio's interference with their noisy festive roystering, "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?"

In an old glossary of the Lancashire dialect, published in 1775, "carlings" are described as "Peas boiled on Care Sunday, *i.e.*, the Sunday before Palm Sunday." "Parched" peas, or peas fried in pepper, butter, and salt, form yet a favourite dish amongst the poorer classes in the north of England on "Carling Sunday." A tradition, indeed, still exists, which asserts that, during a very severe famine, a vessel opportunely arrived in one of the ports, laden with a cargo of peas, to the great delight of the inhabitants; and the "carling" feast is regarded as a memorial of the event.

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independent housekeeping, the old bonds of filial love would be brightened by this pleasant annual visit, signalised, as custom demanded it should be, by the excitement attending some novel and perhaps surprising gift. Herrick, in a canzonet addressed to Dianeme, says:—

"I'll to thee a *simnel* bring,
'Gainst thou go a-mothering;
So that, when she blesses thee,
Half that blessing thou'lt give me."

He here obviously alludes to the sweet cakes which the young person brought to the female parent as a gift; but it would appear that the term "simnel" was in reality applicable to cakes which were in use all through the time of Lent. . . . We learn from Ducange that it was usual in early times to mark the simnels with a figure of Christ or of the Virgin Mary, which would seem to show that they had a religious signification. We know that the Anglo-Saxon, and indeed the German race in general, were in the habit of eating consecrated cakes at their religious festivals. Our hot cross buns at Easter are only the cakes which the pagan Saxons ate in honour of their goddess Eastre, and from which the Christian clergy, who were unable to prevent people from eating, sought to expel the paganism by marking them with the cross. It is curious that the use of these cakes should have been preserved so long in this locality, and still more curious are the tales which have arisen to explain the meaning of the name, which had been long forgotten. Some pretend that the father of Lambert Simnel, the well-known pretender in the reign of Henry VII., was a baker, and the first maker of simnels, and that in consequence of the celebrity he gained by the acts of

Peas and beans have had symbolical or sacred characteristics from the earliest times. Beans were regarded by the Greeks and Romans, according to Plutarch, as highly potent in the invocation of the *manes* of the departed. Brand says: "There is a great deal of learning in Erasmus's Adages concerning the *religious use of beans*, which were thought to belong to the dead. An observation which he gives us of Pliny, concerning Pythagoras's interdiction of this pulse is highly remarkable. It is '*that beans contain the souls of he dead.*' For which cause also they were used in the PARENTALIA." He further adds: "Ridiculous and absurd as these superstitions may appear, yet it is certain that our carlings thence deduce their origin."

There is not, after all, anything very ridiculous or absurd about the matter, when the common Aryan origin of these traditionary superstitions is considered. May not the Roman *Parentalia*, or the offering of oblations or sacrifices, consisting of liquors, victims, and garlands, at stated periods, on the tombs of parents, have had some remote connection with the "mothering" customs referred to, on Mid-

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his son, the cakes have retained his name. There is another story current in Shropshire, which is much more picturesque, and which we tell as nearly as possible in the words in which it was related to us. Long ago there lived an honest old couple, boasting the names of Simon and Nelly, but their surnames are not known. It was their custom at Easter to gather their children about them, and thus meet together once a year under the old homestead. The fast season of Lent was just ending, but still they had left some of the unleavened dough which had been from time to time converted into bread during the forty days. Nelly was a careful woman, and it grieved her to waste anything, so she suggested that they should use the remains of the Lenten dough for the basis of a cake to regale the assembled family. Simon readily agreed to the proposal, and further reminded his partner that there were still some remains of their Christmas plum-pudding hoarded up in the cupboard, and that this might form the interior, and be an agreeable surprise to the young people when they had made their way through the less tasty crust. So far, all things went on harmoniously; but when the cake was made, a subject of violent discord arose, Sim insisting that it should be boiled, while Nell no less obstinately contended that it should be baked. The dispute ran from words to blows, for Nell, not choosing to let her province in the household be thus interfered with, jumped up, and threw the stool she was sitting on at Sim, who on his part seized a besom, and applied it with right good will to the head and shoulders of his spouse. She now seized the broom, and the battle became so warm that it might have had a very serious result, had not Nell proposed as a compromise that the cake should be boiled first and afterwards baked. This Sim acceded to, for he had no wish for further acquaintance with the heavy end of the broom. Accordingly, the big pot was set on the fire, and the stool broken up and thrown on to boil it, whilst the besom and broom furnished fuel for the oven. Some eggs, which had been broken in the scuffle, were used to coat the outside of the pudding when boiled, which gave it the shining gloss it possesses as a cake. This new and remarkable production in the art of confectionery became known by the name of the cake of Simon and Nelly, but soon only the first half of each name was alone preserved and joined together, and it has ever since been known as the cake of Sim-Nel, or Simnel.—*Chambers's Book of Days.*

Lent Sunday? Amongst other objects of the Roman ceremonial, it appears that of an atonement to the ghosts of the departed was included. The storing of peas and beans for the Lenten season was carefully attended to in the middle ages, especially at the religious houses. A French work, printed at Paris, in 1565, entitled "Quadragesimale Spirituale," gives some curious information on this subject. Speaking of the Lenten fare, the writer says:—

"After salad we eat *fried beanes*, by which we understand confession. When we would have *beanes well sooden, we lay them in steepe, otherwise they will never seeth kindly*. Therefore, if we propose to amend our faults, it is not sufficient barely to confess them at all adventure, but we must let our confession lie in steepe in the water of Meditation." He further adds: "River water, which continually moveth, runneth and floweth, is *very good for the seething of pease*."

It appears that the modern Greeks have a custom of depositing *parboiled wheat* with the dead on interment. Gregory says the ceremony was intended to "*signifie the resurrection of the body*." Referring to peas as an element of the Aryan mythology, Walter Kelly says; "The plant and the fruit are in some way or other related to celestial fire. It may be that they were regarded in this light because they belong to the class of creeping or climbing plants to which such relations were pre-eminently attributed; at all events, the fact that they represented something in the vegetation of the sky is substantiated by numerous details in their mythical history."

According to Dr. Kuhn and Schwartz, the flying dragons that poison the air and the waters let fall peas in such quantities that they filled the wells and rendered the water so foul that cattle refused to partake thereof. In the German traditions the Zwergs, the forgers of Thor's lightning hammer, were so fond of peas that they plundered the fields of the husbandman, after rendering themselves invisible by means of their "caps of darkness." Peas with sour crout are yet eaten in Berlin on Thursday (Thor's day), from immemorial habit. Mannhardt speaks of their medical as well as mystical properties, and says that their relation to the lightning is evidenced by the fact of their being used as hazel nuts, and the thunderbolts (certain fossil shells and meteoric stones) to augment the fertility of the corn seed.

A singular custom formerly existed on Maundy Thursday, or the Thursday preceding Easter, when royal personages distributed alms to poor persons. It was named Maundy Thursday from the baskets (or *maunds*) which contained the gifts. In the "Festival," published in 1511, it is said to have been likewise called "Shere Thursday,"

because "anciently people would that day shere theyr hedes and clypp theyr berdes, and so make them honest against Easter-day." After the distribution of the alms in meat, drink, clothing, and money, it was customary for royalty, in imitation of the humility of Jesus Christ, to wash the feet of the recipients of their bounty. James II. was the last of our monarchs who performed this ceremony in person. He was likewise the last who successfully (?) "touched" for the cure of the "king's evil," a conclusive reason to the old Jacobites that his successors were all usurpers!

This, however, did not appear to have been the orthodox faith in earlier times. Aubrey, in his "Miscellanies" (1696), gravely relates that the manner in which the king's evil was cured by the "touch of the king does much puzzle our philosophers (?); for, whether our kings were of the house of York or Lancaster, it did the cure *for the most part!*" He further informs us that the seventh son of a seventh son possessed the regal power; but he qualifies the important fact by the condition that it must be "a seventh son, and no daughter between, and in pure wedlock." He likewise adds, "The touch of a dead hand hath wrought wonderful effects." This last superstition is still current in Lancashire. In the time of James II., the remedial power of the "king's touch," in cases of scrofula, was firmly believed in by others than the vulgar; for, it appears, the corporation of Preston voted the sum of five shillings each to two poor women afflicted with this disease, towards their expense in travelling to Chester, which city his Majesty had honoured with a special visit at the time, to avail themselves of the supposed potency inherent in the royal digits, under such circumstances. This superstition was not entirely discountenanced by those in authority until the reign of George III.

This belief in the supernatural authority of monarchs is but a remnant of the long supposed "divine right" of kings to govern, which resulted from the conviction that they could trace their pedigrees back to the deities themselves. Shakspere, even, puts into the mouth of the murderer and usurper, Claudius, King of Denmark, the following sentence:—

> Let him go, Gertrude. Do not fear our person
> There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
> That treason can but peep to what it would,
> Acts little of his will.

This superstition is by no means confined to civilized or semi-civilized nations. It is almost a universal feeling amongst savage tribes.

The ignorant serf of Russia believed, and indeed yet believes, that if the deity were to die the emperor would succeed to his power and authority. Speke, referring to a very childish but nevertheless very great potentate, who ruled the territory adjacent the Victoria N'yanza, says, "I found that the Waganda have the same absurd notion here as the Wangambo have in Karagué, of Kamrasi's supernatural power in being able to divide the waters of the Nile in the same manner that Moses did the Red Sea."

CHAPTER V.

MAY-DAY CEREMONIES AND SUPERSTITIONS.

Rejoice, Oh English hearts, rejoice!
Rejoice, Oh lovers dear;
Rejoice, Oh city, town, and country,
Rejoice, eke every shire.
For now the fragrant flowers
Do spring and sprout in seemly sort;
The little birds do sit and sing,
The lambs do make fine sport.
Up then, I say both young and old,
Both man and maid amaying,
With drums and guns that bounce aloud,
And merry tabor playing.
Old May-day Song.

The May-day festivities and superstitious ceremonies belong to the same antique or pagan class as those previously described. The Irish antiquary, O'Brien, says that the practice of lighting fires in honour of the god Bel, on May-day, gave the Irish name "Mina-Bealtine" to the flowery month. Brand says: "In honour of May-day, the Goths and Southern Swedes had a mock battle between summer and winter, which ceremony is retained in the Isle of Man, where the Danes and Norwegians had been for a long time masters." This, evidently, is a remnant of an Aryan myth. Palus Magnus says, the "Northern natives have a custom to welcome the returning splendour of the sun with dancing, and mutually to feast each other, rejoicing that a better season for feasting and hunting was approached." Tollet quaintly says: "Better judges may decide that the institution of this festival originated from the Roman Floralia, or from the Celtic La Beltine, while I conceive it derived to us from our Gothic ancestors." The theory of the common Aryan source of these festive rites reconciles Tollet's conception with the decision of the "better judges," for whose opinion he evidently entertains profound respect. The Rev. Mr. Maurice, in his learned work on "The Antiquities of India," contends that the May-day festivities were originally inaugurated at the vernal equinox, and that they pertained to a "phallic festival to celebrate the generative

powers of nature." From this stand-point he argues that they are the remains of very ancient ceremonies well known to Egypt, India, and other places. His reasoning on this subject is very learned and ingenious. He says:—

"When the reader calls to mind what has already been observed, that, owing to a precession of the equinox, after the rate of seventy-two years to a degree, a total alteration has taken place through all the signs of the ecliptic, insomuch that those stars which formerly were in Aries have now got into Taurus, and those of Taurus into Gemini; and when he considers also the difference before mentioned, occasioned by the reform of the calendar, he will not wonder at the disagreement that exists in respect to the exact period of the year on which the great festivals were anciently kept, and that on which, in imitation of primæval customs, they are celebrated by the moderns. Now, the vernal equinox, after the rate of that precession, certainly could not have coincided with the first of May less than four thousand years before Christ, which nearly marks the æra of creation, which, according to the best and wisest of chronologers, began at the vernal equinox, when all nature was gay and smiling, and the earth arrayed in its loveliest verdure, and not, as others have imagined, at the dreary autumnal equinox, when that nature must necessarily have its beauty declining, and that earth its verdure decaying. I have little doubt, therefore, that May-day, or at least the day on which the sun entered Taurus, has been immemorably kept as a sacred festival from the creation of the earth and man, and was originally intended as a memorial of that auspicious period and that momentous event. . . . . On the general devotion of the ancients to the worship of the *bull* I have had frequent occasion to remark, and *more particularly in the Indian history*, by their devotion to it at that period—

'Aperit cum cornibus annum Taurus.'

'When the bull with his horns epeneth the vernal year.' I observed that all nations seem anciently to have vied with each other in celebrating that blissful epoch; and that the moment the sun entered the sign Taurus, were displayed the signals of triumph and the incentives to passion; that memorials of the universal festivity indulged in at that season are to be found in the records and customs of people otherwise the most opposite in manners and most remote in situation. I could not avoid considering the circumstance as a strong additional proof that mankind originally descended from one great family, and proceeded to the several regions in which they finally settled, from one common and central spot; that the Apis, or sacred

bull of Egypt, was only the symbol of the sun in the vigour of vernal youth; that the bull of Japan, breaking with his horn the mundane egg, was evidently connected with the same bovine species of superstition, founded on the mixture of astronomy and mythology."

According to Mr. Maurice's calculation, the vernal equinox could not have coincided with the first degree of Aries later, at the latest, than eighteen hundred years before Christ. The festival of the vernal equinox would then be celebrated on the first of April. The modern "April fool" freaks are regarded by many writers as relics of these festivities. In India this is termed the Huli festival. It has previously been shown that, in modern Welsh, *heulo* means to shine as the sun. *Heulog* likewise means sunny or sunshiny.

The original purport of most of the May-day ceremonials was unquestionably a demonstration of joy at the return of spring. Rome, speaking of the tower of Magdalen College, Oxford, and its famous peal of ten bells, says, "On May-day the choristers assemble on the top to usher in the spring." Oxonians of the "olden time," appear to have welcomed the season not simply by blowing lustily through cows' horns, but by drinking deeply from cups fashioned therefrom. Herne says this blowing and drinking was done "upon the jollities of the first of May, to remind people of the pleasantness of that part of the year, which ought to create mirth and gaiety."

In the north of England, especially, Bourne informs us, that the more youthful portion of the villagers, of both sexes, were in the habit, at midnight, on the eve of May-day, of rendezvousing in some neighbouring wood, with the view of gathering green branches of trees and wild flowers, from which they made garlands, etc., and carried them in procession during the day. Some of these garlands were afterwards deposited in the neighbouring churches; others decorated the doors and windows of the villagers' residences. It appears that the gathering of these woodspoils was accompanied by much clangour of rude music, including the blowing of cows' horns, previously referred to. Stubbs, the Puritan, in his "Anatomy of Abuses," published in 1585, rebukes this custom on account of the immoralities which such midnight forest gatherings would doubtless give rise to. And yet the practice was very common, and was countenanced by the highest in rank in the kingdom. King Henry VIII. and his Queen, Katherine of Arragon, and the courtiers, are reported to have much enjoyed this species of pastime.

Stubbs thus describes the custom he denounces :—

"Against May, every parish, town, and village assembled them-

selves together, both men, women, and children, old and young, even all indifferently, and either going all together or dividing themselves into companies, they go, some to the woods and groves, some to the hills and mountains, some to one place, some to another, where they spend all the night in pastimes, and in the morning they return, bringing with them birch boughs and branches of trees, to deck their assembly withal."

Chaucer, in his "Court of Love," makes reference to the May-day ceremonies of his time, and says that early in the morning "fourth goth al the Court, both most and lest, to fetche the flouris fresh, and braunch and blome."

The supposed appropriateness of May-day for love-making is referred to by Shakspere in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Lysander, in the first act, wishing to further his suit to Hermia, says :—

> If thou lovest me, then,
> Steal from thy father's house to-morrow night;
> And in the wood, a league without the town,
> Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
> *To do observance of a morn of May*,
> There will I stay for thee.

Again, in the fourth act, when Theseus and his hunting party discover the two pairs of sweethearts asleep in the wood, the Duke, in reply to a query by Egeus, says :—

> No doubt, *they rose up early, to observe*
> *The rite of May;* and, hearing our intent,
> Come here in grace of our solemnity.

Herrick, in a quaint lyric on this subject, says :—

> There's not a budding boy or girl, this day,
> But is got up and gone to bring in May;
> A deal of youth ere this is come
> Back, with white-thorn laden home.

Milton thus magnificently apostrophises the advent of the "flowery month" :—

> Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,
> Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her
> The flow'ry May, who from her green lap throws
> The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.
> Hail, bounteous May! thou dost inspire
> Mirth and youth and fond desire;
> Woods and groves are of thy dressing,
> Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
> Thus we salute thee with our early song,
> And welcome thee and wish thee long.

Old Stowe thus quaintly describes the May-day doings in the beginning of the seventeenth century:—

"On May-day, in the morning, every man, except impediment, would walke into the sweete meadowes and greene woods, there to rejoyce their spirites with the beauty and savour of sweete flowers, and with the harmony of birds praysing God in their kind. I find also that in the moneth of May the citizens of London, of all estates, lightly in every parish, or sometimes two or three parishes joyning together, had their severall Mayings, and did fetch in Maypoles, with diverse warlike shewes, with good archers, morice dauncers, and other devices, for pastime all day long, and towards the evening they had stage playes and bonfieers in the streets."

Polwhele, in his "History of Cornwall," describes a spring festival, said to be of very ancient origin, annually celebrated at Helston on the 8th of May, named the "Furry," or gathering. The day opens with singing and the beating of drums and kettles. The whole population rush out of the town into the country, and return garlanded with leaves and flowers, in which guise they caper about the streets, and enter unmolested each others' houses to congratulate their neighbours on the return of spring.

The young people of Spotland, in the parish of Rochdale, are yet in the habit of assembling on the hill sides on the first Sunday in May, and exchanging congratulations on the return of spring. They drink to each others' health in liquor supplied by the pure mountain streamlets—no inapt substitute for the "heavenly soma" of the Vedic hymns. No doubt, some genuine love-making, as well as much licentiousness, has resulted from the observance of such ceremonies. It was formerly a custom, for milkmaids especially, in various parts of the country, to dance around a "garland" decorated with articles of value, very much after the fashion of the rush-bearers of Lancashire at the present day. The latter adorn their rush-cart and its contents with goblets, watches, and other polished metal articles, lent by friends for the occasion. Brand, speaking of the milkmaids in the neighbourhood of London, says:—

"They used to dress themselves in holiday guise on this morning, and come in bands with fiddles, whereto they danced, attended by a strange-looking pyramidal pile, covered with pewter plates, ribands, and streamers, either borne by a man upon his head or by two men upon a hand-barrow; this was called their garland."

Doubtless, the "well-dressing," or the decoration of springs and

fountains with flowers, yet very common in some counties, and especially in Derbyshire, either owes its origin to the Roman Floralia, or to a still older custom, the common Aryan root of both. Dr. Stukeley, the celebrated antiquary, writing in 1724, speaks of a May-pole near Horn Castle, Lincolnshire, on a spot "where probably stood an Hermes in Roman times." He adds: "The boys annually keep up the festival of the *Floralia* on May-day, making a procession to this hill with May gads (as they call them) in their hands. This is a white willow wand, the bark peeled off, ty'd round with cowslips, a thyrsus of the Bacchanals. At night they have a bonefire, and other merriment, which is really a sacrifice or religious festival."

The old Puritan writers seem to have entertained a most profound horror of the ancient May-day festivities. Friar Tuck was pronounced a remnant of popery; maid Marian was the scarlet lady herself; and the hobby-horse was consigned to the limbo of defunct pagan superstitions. A May-pole was an abomination equalled only in atrocity by a "Whitsun-ale" or a "Morris-dance." Old Stubbs calls the May-pole a "stinking idol," and says it was brought home with "great *veneration*," hence his malediction. The attendant ceremony he describes as follows: "They have twenty or forty yoke of oxen, every ox having a sweet nosegay of flowers tied to the tips of his horns; and these oxen draw home the May-pole, covered all over with flowers and herbs, bound round with strings from the top to the bottom, and sometimes painted with variable colours, having two or three hundred men, women, and children following it with great *devotion*." Stubbs evidently knew that the May-pole was of pagan origin, if he was ignorant of its phallic character.

The court, however, favoured some of these pastimes. King James I. received a deputation on the subject during his stay at Hoghton Tower; and at Myerscough, near Preston, in Lancashire, he made a "speeche about libertie to piping and honest recreation." This was followed by his famous proclamation, levelled chiefly against the "Puritans and precise people of Lancashire." This action culminated in the still more celebrated "Book of Sports." Charles I., in 1633, republished "his blessed father's declaration," which decreed that "after the end of Divine service, his good people be not disturbed, letted, or discouraged from any lawful recreation; such as dancing, either men or women; archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any other such harmless recreations; nor from having of May Games, Whitsun Ales, and Morris Dances, and the setting up of

May-poles, and other sports therewith used; so as the same may be had in due and convenient time, without impediment or neglect of Divine Service. And that women shall have leave to carry rushes to the church, for the decoration of it according to their old custom. But withall his Majesty doth hereby account still as prohibited all unlawful games to be used, on Sundays only, as bear and bull baitings, interludes, and, at all times, in the meaner sort of people, as by law prohibited, bowling."

Our ancestors appear to have regarded the playing at bowls as an especially dignified recreation, and to have guarded by statute the game from any profanation by the vulgar. Old Strype records that owing to threatened disturbances in the North of England, a strict search was made, in every part of the kingdom, on the night of Sunday, the 10th July, 1569, for vagrants, beggars, gamesters, rogues, or gypsies. It resulted in the apprehension of thirteen thousand "masterless men." The chief offence with which they were charged was that they had no visible mode of living, "except that which was derived from *unlawful* games, especially of bowling, and maintenance of archery."

The sight of a May-pole, so offensive to the Puritan of old, excited a very different train of thought in the imagination of Washington Irving, on his first visit to this country. He says:—

"I shall never forget the delight I felt on first seeing a May-pole. It was on the banks of the Dee, close by the picturesque old bridge that stretches across the river from the quaint little city of Chester. I had already been carried back into former days by the antiquities of that venerable place, the examination of which is equal to turning over the pages of a black letter volume, or gazing on the pictures in Froissart. The May-pole on the margin of that poetic stream completed the illusion. My fancy adorned it with wreaths of flowers, and peopled the green bank with all the dancing revelry of May-day. The mere sight of this May-pole gave a glow to my feelings, and spread a charm over the country for the rest of the day; and, as I traversed a part of the fair plain of Cheshire, and the beautiful borders of Wales, and looked from among swelling hills down a long green valley, through which 'the Deva wound its wizard stream,' my imagination turned all into a perfect Arcadia."

The Laureate, in his beautiful poem, "The May Queen," has most happily pourtrayed the buoyant, joyous heart-feeling of the modern juvenile representative of the mythical Maid Marian of old. Eliza Cook, in one of the most successful of her many truly national songs,

has hit off the spirit of the ancient May-day festivities with remarkable truthfulness and power :—

My brave land! my brave land! oh, may'st thou be my grave-land!
For firm and fond will be the bond that ties my breast to thee.
When Summer's beams are glowing, when Autumn's gusts are blowing,
When Winter's clouds are snowing, thou art still right dear to me.
But yet methinks I love thee best
When bees are nursed on white-thorn breast,
When spring-tide pours in—sweet and blest—
And Mirth and Hope come dancing;
When music from the feathered throng
Breaks forth in merry marriage-song,
And mountain streamlets dash along,
Like molten diamonds glancing!

Oh! pleasant 'tis to scan the page,
Rich with the theme of by-gone age;
When motley fool and learned sage
Brought garlands for the gay pole;
When laugh and shout came ringing out
From courtly knight and peasant lout,
In "Hurrah for merry England, and
The raising of the May-pole;"
When the good old times had carol rhymes,
With morris games and village chimes;
When clown and priest shared cup and feast,
And the greatest jostled with the least,
At the "raising of the May-pole."

The people of Lancashire, until very recently, kept the May-day festival with considerable *éclat*. Indeed, it is by no means forgotten at the present day. The main streets of Preston, Manchester, and other towns, during "the good old coaching time," presented a remarkably gay appearance, in consequence of the horses being decorated, and some of them profusely, with ribbons and other festive ornaments.

The decoration of horses with flowers and ribbons, the raising of May-poles, and the attendant dances and games, are yet far from obsolete in many parts of England. A few years ago I attended a May-day gathering at a village in North Cheshire; but the dancers, as well as the May Queen, were all children, and the spectators chiefly ladies and gentlemen from Manchester and its neighbourhood. It was a very pretty sight, and was patronised by the neighbouring "squire" (R. E. Warburton)* and his family, but it lacked the

* Mr. Warburton is the author of several capital hunting and other songs, in the dialect of North Cheshire.

healthy rusticity which I had anticipated from the hearty enjoyment of lusty farm labourers and their sweethearts in the old-fashioned May-day dance.

The Rev. Jno. E. Sedgwick, of St. Alban's Church, Cheetwood, Manchester, has recently revived the May-day games; but, although termed May-day festivities, the decoration of the May-pole, the crowning of the May Queen, etc., which I visited, took place, in 1867, in Whit-week, which is the great Manchester holiday. The children looked pretty with their pink sashes and wreaths of green leaves, and evidently enjoyed themselves much. With this exception, however, the affair was in little distinguishable from ordinary holiday sports, and it certainly lacked the necessary rusticity to suggest any strong sympathy with the rural festival of the "olden time."

The practice of gathering hawthorn blossoms, where practicable on the 1st of May, still continues, and in many localities superstition lingers respecting the supernatural properties of this tree. The hanging up in the homestead of a white thorn branch procured on May-day was supposed to act as an antidote to the machinations of witchcraft. Both the white and black thorn are considered as representatives of the *Mimosa catechu*, the sacred thorn of India, which, being sprung from lightning, was supposed to be endowed with supernatural properties. Amongst the Germans "wishing" or "divining" rods were made from both the black and the white thorn. Walter Kelly says, "The wood of the thorn (ramnos) was used by the Greeks for the drilling stick of their pyreia (or fire-producing chark), and it was held by them to be prophylactic against magic, as the white thorn was by the Romans, among whom it was used for marriage torches."

I have referred, in a preceding chapter, to the superstition respecting the blossoming of the Christmas thorn at midnight, on *Old* Christmas eve. The legend has, no doubt, intimate relationship to the presumed supernatural attributes of the celebrated Glastonbury thorn, and its progeny. The original plant, according to Collinson's "History of Somersetshire," was the dry hawthorn staff which St. Joseph of Arimathea stuck into the ground when weary with journeying.

In one of the Coventry Mysteries, "The Miraculous Espousal of Mary and Joseph," the blossoming of the rod of the latter is the sign that he is the destined husband of the former. When the feeble old man unwillingly appears before the "bishop Issachar," he is surprised

to see his staff break out into flower. Issachar is equally astonished, and exclaims :—

A mercy ! mercy ! mercy ! lord, we crye !
The blyssyd of God we see art thou !
. . . . .
Here may be see a merveyl one,
A ded stok beryth fflours ffre.
Joseph, in hert, with outen mone,
Thou may'st be blyth, with game and gle,
A mayd to wedde, thou must gone,
Be this meracle I do wel se ;
Mary is here name.

This superstition bears evident marks of near relationship to some of both the Greek and the Indoo, as well as other Eastern mythical faiths. The blossoming staff of Joseph appears to be but a reproduction of the budding thyrsus of the Bacchanals and of Hermes, which is regarded as a phallic symbol, typical of the reproductive forces of nature. In the Teutonic mythology the fylfot, or revivifying hammer of Thor, as previously shown, likewise reproduces a phallic symbol.

So highly were branches and blossoms from the Glastonbury thorn esteemed that Bristol merchants exported large quantities. The Puritans, in Elizabeth's reign, cut down one of its stems, and the other was demolished during the "Great Rebellion." Collinson says, "It is strange to see how much this tree was sought after by the credulous; and, though a common thorn, Queen Anne, King James, and many of the nobility of the realm, even when the times of monkish superstition had ceased, gave large sums of money for small cuttings from the original."

Some authorities regard this Christmas flowering thorn as a variety of the *cratægus monogyna*, or common hawthorn, probably brought by the early crusaders from Palestine. If this be true, it throws some light on the origin of the reverence in which it was held by the pilgrims to the shrine of St. Joseph at Glastonbury.

The sacred character of the white thorn especially, appears to have become interwoven with a great variety of superstitious belief. A writer in the *Quarterly Review* for July, 1863, treating of "Sacred Trees and Flowers," says, "The white thorn is one of the trees most in favour with the small people" [the fairies]; "and both in Brittany and in some parts of Ireland it is held unsafe to gather even a leaf from certain old and solitary thorns which grow in sheltered hollows of the moorland, and are the fairies' trysting places. But no '*evil ghost*' dares to approach the white thorn." The writer attributes this peculiar sanctity of the white thorn to the belief that the crown

placed in derision on the head of Christ, previous to his crucifixion, was made from branches of this tree; and, doubtless, at the present day, such may be mainly the case, although, as the writer himself observes, modern botanical researches have taught us that the fact "cannot have been so." Kelly says we know more than even this; "we know that the white thorn was a sacred tree before Christianity existed, so that we must needs invert the statement of the writer in the *Quarterly*, and conclude that the ancient sanctity of the aubépine, or white thorn, was what gave rise to the mediæval belief." He further contends that the excerpt relied upon by the writer, from Sir John Mandeville, who flourished in the earlier portion of the fourteenth century, shows on its face that the old wanderer was "an unconscious witness to the enduring vitality of the Aryan tradition that invested the hawthorn with the virtues of a tree sprung from the lightning."

The passage referred to is curious. Sir John says, "Then was our Lord ylad into a gardyn . . . and there the Jews scorned hym, and maden hym a croune of the braunches of the albespyne, that is white thorn, that grew in the same gardyn, and seten yt on hys heved. . . . And, therefore, hath the white thorn many virtues. For he that beareth a braunch on hym thereof, no thondere, no ne manner of tempest may dere [hurt] him; ne in the hows that yt is ynne may non evil ghost entre."

The knowledge of the traditionary faith in the sanctity of this tree invests with considerable interest the eagerness of children, resident in populous towns, to obtain a sprig of hawthorn blossom from any stranger returning from the country with a few branches of this May trophy. I have had scores of applications of this class for the small branches which I have carried in my hand from Old Trafford to Manchester. But, of course, children exhibit a similarly eagerly desire to obtain possession of flowers, and especially wild flowers, of every class. Longfellow has beautifully said:—

> In the cottage of the rudest peasant,
> In ancestral homes whose crumbling towers,
> Speaking of the Past unto the Present,
> Tell us of the ancient games of Flowers;
> In all places, then, and in all seasons,
> Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings,
> Teaching us, by most persuasive reasons,
> How akin they are to human things;
> And with child-like, credulous affection,
> We behold their tender buds expand;
> Emblems of our own great resurrection,
> Emblems of the bright and better land.

Amongst the other virtues ascribed to dew gathered on May-day morning, its supposed power over the complexion yet finds believers. Old Pepys, in his most interesting, if sometimes stupid, diary, says :— "My wife away down with Jane and W. Hewer to Woolwich, in order to a little ayre, and to lay there to-night, and so to gather May dew to-morrow morning, which Mrs. Turner hath taught her is the only thing in the world to wash her face with; and I am contented with it." Kelly says: "The Aryan idea, that the rain clouds were cows, has been well preserved among the Northern nations. . . . It is a very common opinion that rain and dew, the milk of the heavenly cows, are capable of increasing the milk of the earthly cows; hence a dewy May morning is welcomed as giving promise of a good dairy year." Mannhardt speaks of a practice in North Germany of tying a May bush to the tail of the leading cow on May-day morning, in order that she may brush up the potent dew, and so increase the contents of her udder. But the strangest faith in the potency of May-dew is related by Sir John Mandeville. The quaint old traveller seriously assures us that in Ethiopia there are male and female diamonds that enter into matrimonial relationship and have offspring! Nay, he declares that he himself has "*often tymes assayed it*," and found that the precious stones do grow year by year, on one condition, namely, that they be well wetted with May-dew! He says :—

"And ther be sume of the gretnesse of a bene, and sume als grete as an haselle note. And thei ben square and poynted of here owne kinde, bothe aboven and benethen, withouten worchinge of mannes hond. And thei growen to gedre, male and femele. And thei ben norysscht with the dew of Hevene. And thei engendren comounly, and bryngen forthe smale children, that multiplyen and growen alle the yeer. I have often tymes assayed, that gif a man kepe hem with a litylle of the roche, and wete hem with May dew ofte sithes, thei schulle growe everyche yeer; and the small wole waxen grete."

Sir Kenelm Digby, two centuries ago, in a letter to the younger Winthorp, governor of New England, expresses his great faith in the efficacy of dew in the cure of deliriums, frenzies, and manias; but he does not intimate any preference for dew gathered on May-day. All dew does not appear, however, to have possessed these curative qualities. Some, indeed, was of a malignant or deadly character. Ariel, in "the Tempest," speaks of "the deep nook" in the harbour

> where once,
> Thou call'dst me up at midnight to fetch dew
> From the still-vext Bermothes.

Caliban, when venting his rage on Prospero and Miranda, can find no stronger curse than the following:—

> As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd
> With raven's feather from unwholesome fen,
> Drop on you both !

May not this dew superstition have relationship, in some of its phases, to the classic myth of Kephalos (the head of the sun), Procris (the dew), and Eos (the east or morning) ? Mr. Cox says "it sprung from three simple phrases, one of which said, 'The sun loves the dew;' while the second said that 'the morning loves the sun;' and the third added that 'the sun killed the dew.'" Hence both the good and evil influences attendant thereon.

CHAPTER VI.

WITCHCRAFT.

> What are these,
> So wither'd and so wild in their attire;
> That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
> And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
> That man may question?
>
> *Shakspere.*

The county of Lancaster especially has been famous for its witches—or infamous, rather, if the reader prefer the latter epithet. Certainly, the hanging of the poor old women from Pendle side, for their supposed sorcery, is neither a legislative nor a judicial feat to feel very proud of, especially in these days of "spirit-rapping mediums" and dark *séance* performers, who supply writing done by invisible hands, and cause heads to be thumped by malignant imps in the shape of discordant fiddles, trumpets, and tambourines. This modern necromancery, it must not be forgotten, is performed under aristocratic patronage, and *for a monetary consideration* which would have rejoiced greatly the hearts that beat wildly beneath the weather-worn skins of poor old Dame Demdike and her compeers. Truly, popular superstition, as well as tradition, is "tough." Forms, manners, and customs may change externally, but it requires the lapse of long, long periods of time to totally eradicate from the imagination of an entire people *all faith* in any mystery, however absurd to modern scientific minds, to which their ancestors once clung with simple earnest truthfulness. The witchcraft of the old Demdike and Chattox school, in all its essential features, is derived from the early superstitions of our Eastern Aryan progenitors. Nay, the mystical character of many of its more vulgar "stage properties," such as cauldrons, besoms, sieves, hares, cats, &c., was recorded with all due solemnity in the Rig Vedas of the Southern Aryans, some three thousand two hundred years ago. Pliny says that, in his day, the

Britons celebrated magic rites with so many similar ceremonies that one might suppose them to have been instructed therein by the Persians. In the Britain of our day, after passing through both Keltic, Teutonic, Greek, and Roman channels, these superstitions yet exist either in the traditionary lore of the rustic population, or the more elevated art forms with which poetry, sculpture, and painting have clothed them. The diamond crystal and the charred willow branch are near relatives of the carbon family; and it may truly be said that a similar relationship exists between the weird "folk lore" of the wild moorlands or the lonely mountain glens and the noble artistic creations of a Shakspere, a Walter Scott, an Ovid, a Homer, an Apelles, or a Phidias. Truly, "one touch of Nature makes the whole world kin," and especially if that touch be given by a finger which has been dipped deeply in the dark pool of mysticism.

Witches appear, on the whole, and in more modern times especially, to typify evil or malignant influences, and are not unfrequently degraded forms of the deities of a preceding mythology. Kelly, on the authority of Schwartz and others, speaks of the "human witches" of Northern nations as "degenerate and abhorred representatives of the ancient goddesses and their attendants, who were themselves developments of the primitive conception of the *cloud-women*; but witches, even in their degraded state, exhibit a multitude of characteristics by which we can recognise the originals of whom they are but loathsome caricatures. Their alleged May-day meetings, for instance, on the Brocken, the Blocksberg, and at Lucken Hare, in the Eildon Hills, are not, as commonly supposed, merely reminiscences of certain popular gatherings in heathen times, but were originally assemblages of goddesses and their retinues, making their customary progress through the land at the opening of the spring, and visible to their believing votaries in the shifting clouds about the summits of the mountains. Even the May-day night dances of the witches, with the devil for the master of the ceremonies in the shape of a buck goat, are but coarse representations of weather tokens of the early spring; they are analogous in all but their ugliness to the dances of the nymphs, led by the goat-footed Pan at the same glad season of the year amongst the clouds on the windy mountain tops of Arcadia." The witch revelling at Alloway Kirk, as detailed in several Scottish traditions, and rendered immortal by the genius of Burns, seems to confirm this view.

Amongst the infernal deities of classical mythology were the Fates or Destinies, named Parcæ. They were, like Shakspere's weird sisters,

three in number, and are said by some to have been the offspring of Erebus and Nox, and by others of Jupiter and Themis. Their mode of divination was a spinning process. When determining the future life or career of a mortal, Clotho held the distaff, while Lachesis did the spinning and Atropos cut the thread. According to Ovid, these divining deities were equally successful in their occult labours when without, as when with, some necessary "staple" on which to exercise their spinning ingenuity or skill.

Witches were supposed to compass the death of any obnoxious individual by making an image of the victim in wax. As this slowly melted before a fire, or under other applied heat, it was believed the original would in like manner sicken and decay. Images were frequently formed of other materials, and maltreated in some form or other, to produce similar results. This superstition yet obtains to a great extent in the East and elsewhere. Dubois, in his "People of India," speaks of magicians who make small images in mud or clay, and write the names of the objects of their animosity on the breasts thereof. These are afterwards pierced with thorns or otherwise mutilated, "so as to communicate a corresponding injury to the person represented."

There is considerable affinity, in this phase of the superstition, to the classic solar myth which records the doom of Meleager. The Mœræ, the three sisters, or the Fates, informed Althæa, the mother of the future hero, when in his cradle, that her son would die when a certain brand they pointed out on the hearth was totally consumed. She instantly snatched it away, plunged it into water, and hid it in a secret place. In later years, Meleager slew a brother of Althæa, which so exasperated the mother that she laid her curse upon her son. She brought out the brand from its hiding place, and flung it on the fire. As it burnt away, the strength of the hero decayed, and, with the extinguishing of its last spark, he expired. Mr. Cox says Meleager's life is that "of the sun, which is bound up with the torch of day; when the torch burns out he dies."

The gradual change of the old Aryan superstition into its more modern form would seem to be indicated by a passage in the writings of Pomponius Mela, who flourished in the reign of the Emperor Claudius. The old writer, describing what his translator terms a "Druidical nunnery," says it "was situated in an island in the British sea, and contained nine of these *venerable vestals*, who pretended that they could raise storms and tempests by their incantations, could cure the most incurable diseases, could transform themselves into all kinds of animals, and foresee future events."

Reginald Scot, in his "Discoverie of Witchcraft," published in 1584, describes the nature of the faith in this superstition as it existed in his day, and for ridiculing which he was covered with obloquy, and his book was not only "refuted" by King James I. and a host of others, but it was ignominiously consigned to the flames by the hands of the common hangman. This shrewd old writer says:

"No one endued with common sense but will deny that the elements are obedient to witches and at their commandment, or that they may, at their pleasure, send rain, hail, tempests, thunder, lightning, when she, being but an old doting woman, casteth a flint stone over her left shoulder towards the west, or hurleth a little sea sand up into the element, or wetteth a broom-sprig in water, and sprinkleth the same in the air; or diggeth a pit in the earth, and, putting water therein, stirreth it about with her finger; or boileth hogs' bristles; or layeth sticks across upon a bank where never was a drop of water; or burieth sage till it be rotten; all which things are confessed by witches, and affirmed by writers to be the means that witches used to move extraordinary tempests and rain."

The elaborate titlepage of this curious work, vividly illustrates the condition of the public mind on this subject in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries:—"Scot's Discovery of Witchcraft; Familiars; and their power to kill, torment, and consume the bodies of men, women, and children, or other creatures by disease or otherwise; their flying in the Air etc.: To be but imaginary Erronious conceptions and novelties; wherein also the lewde, unchristian practises of Witchmongers, upon aged, melancholy, ignorant and superstitious people in extorting confessions by inhumane terrors and Tortures is notably detected. Also the knavery and confederacy of Conjurors. The impious blasphemy of Inchanters. The imposture of Soothsayers, and infidelity of Atheists. The delusion of Pythonists, Figure-casters, Astrologers, and vanity of Dreamers. The fruitlesse beggerly act of Alchimistry. The horrible act of Poisoning and all the tricks and conveyances of juggling and legerdemain are fully deciphered. With many other things opened that have long lain hidden: though very necessary to be known for the undeceiving of Judges, Justices, and Juries, and for the preservation of poor, aged, deformed, ignorant people; frequently taken, arraigned, condemned and executed for Witches, when according to a right understanding, and a good conscience, Physic, Food, and necessaries should be administered to him. Whereunto is added a treatise upon the nature and substance of Spirits and Divels, &c., all written and

published in Anno 1584. By Reginald Scot, Esquire. Printed by R. C. and are to be sold by Giles Calvert dwelling at the Black Spread-Eagle, at the West-End of Pauls, 1651."

Wierus, a German physician, indeed, in 1563, published a work, in which he undertook the refutation of many of the so-called facts and phenomena which were believed to pertain to witchcraft, but he apparently dared not to venture a direct denial of the existence of sorcery or demoniacal possession. He, however, did much, considering the conditions by which he was surrounded. He thanked God that his labour had not been in vain, but that it had "in many places caused the cruelty against innocent blood to slacken." He claimed, and certainly deserved, the civic wreath, for having saved the lives of so many of his fellow-citizens.

Doubtless, in addition to the genuine superstition, there existed, as at the present time, a certain amount of imposture in connection therewith, although, owing to the heavy penalties inflicted by the law, the credulous element may be supposed to have largely preponderated. It is somewhat remarkable that the celebrated Pendle witches, Demdike, Chattox, &c., were pronounced *genuine* sorcerers, and were hanged accordingly, at Lancaster, in the year 1612; while the eight from Samlesbury, near Preston, were acquitted, because they were suspected to be not the *genuine* article, but a fraudulent imitation thereof.

So thoroughly saturated was the public mind with a belief in witchcraft, until a relatively recent period, that hundreds were yearly executed for this supposed crime. Howell, in his "State Trials," estimates that, in one hundred and fifty years, thirty thousand persons suffered death as witches in England alone!

Bishop Jewel, when preaching a sermon before Queen Elizabeth, exhorted her Majesty to use her authority to check the "tremendous operations of the devil by exterminating his agents, the witches and wizards, who were then very numerous."

Reginald Scot gives us a very graphic full-length portrait of the devil of popular superstition in the sixteenth century. He says, "Our mothers' mayds terrifie us with the ouglie devil, with hornes on his head, fier in his mouth, a huge tayle in his breach, eies like basons, fangs like a boar, claws like a tiger, a skin like a bear, and a voice roaring like a lion."

A Keltic hairy wood-demon was called *Dus*, hence our modern "the Deuce." A similar Teutonic monster was named *Scrat*, hence our "Old Scratch."

In 1633, seventeen Pendle witches were condemned to die ; but Charles I. pardoned them. Strange as it may appear, some of them confessed themselves guilty. Such is the fascinating influence of superstition, that imposture itself gradually yields to its power. There is an old Lancashire saying that if a man will only tell a lie a certain number of times he will eventually himself regard it as a truth. One of the seventeen Pendle witches last referred to, Margaret Johnson, in her confession said, "Good Friday is one constant day for a generall meetinge of witches, and that on Good Friday last they had a generall meetinge neere Pendle Water syde." One of the Samlesbury "impostors," a girl named Grace Sowerbutts, stated that she had been induced to join the sisterhood, and she gave an account of the means adopted to acquire the diabolical potency, which, it appears, was not considered satisfactory by the judges, even of that day. Flying over Ribble with their "familiars" was one of the ordinary feats of the gang, according to this youthful witch. Perhaps Grace's face wanted the orthodox number of wrinkles to gain her credence in an affair of so much mystery and importance at that period.

A remarkable instance of this species of delusion occurred at Salem, in New England, in 1682. During the excitement which prevailed in Massachusetts at this time, about twenty persons were put to death for witchcraft. One woman confessed that she had ridden from Andover to a witch meeting on a broomstick. She added that the stick broke, and that the lameness under which she at the time suffered resulted from the accident. Her daughter and granddaughter confirmed her evidence, and declared they all signed Satan's book together. Others confessed to equally strange delusions. And yet, it appears the inhabitants of Rhode Island formed an exception to the rule, for they declared "there were no witches on earth, nor devils,—except the New England ministers, and such as they!"

Hallam notices a parallel case of delusion recorded in the "Memoirs of Du Clercq," which happened at Arras, in 1459. He says :—

"A few obscure persons were accused of '*vauderie*, or witchcraft.' After their condemnation, which was founded on confessions obtained by torture, and afterwards retracted, an epidemical contagion of superstitious dread was diffused all around. Numbers were arrested, burned alive, by order of a tribunal instituted for the detection of this offence, or detained in prison ; so that no person in Arras thought himself safe. It was believed that many were accused for the sake

of their possessions, which were confiscated to the use of the church. At length the Duke of Burgundy interfered, and put a stop to the persecutions."

That the fraudulent element most probably entered largely into the motives of witch prosecutions is attested by some instances in connection with the Lancashire trials. Mr. Crossley, in the republication of "Potts's Discovery of Witches," by the Chetham Society, says "the main interest in reviewing this miserable band of victims will be felt to centre in Alice Nutter. Wealthy, well-conducted, well-connected, and placed probably on an equality with most of the neighbouring families, and the magistrates before whom she was committed, she deserves to be distinguished from the companions with whom she suffered, and to attract an attention which has never yet been directed to her. That James Dervice, on whose evidence she was convicted, was instructed to accuse her by her own nearest relatives, and that the magistrate, Roger Nowell, entered as a confederate into the conspiracy against her on account of a long-disputed boundary, are allegations which tradition has preserved, but the truth or falsehood of which, at this distance of time, it is scarcely possible satisfactorily to examine. Her mansion, Rough Lee, is still standing, a very substantial and rather fine specimen of the houses of the inferior gentry, *temp.* James I., but now divided into cottages."

It was likewise suspected by the magistrates that a seminary priest, named Thompson, *alias* Southworth, had instigated the girl Sowerbutts to make the charges in the Samlesbury case previously referred to.

Some excuse for the popular frenzy on the subject may be found in the fact that not only did the king and the highest legal authorities in the land recognise the crimes of sorcery and witchcraft, but dignitaries of the church, like Bishop Jewel, in Elizabeth's reign, complained of the great increase in the number of these offenders. Such men as Sir Thomas Brown, indeed, went so far as to stigmatise the sceptical on the subject as guilty of atheism.

Sir Kenelm Digby seems to have doubted. Nevertheless, in his "Observations on the Religio Medici," after expressing his doubts, he adds:—"Neither do I deny there are witches; I only reserve my assent till I meet with stronger motives to carry it." Sir Kenelm, however, notwithstanding his scepticism about witchcraft, could swallow tolerably large doses of the marvellous. In a letter to J. Winthorp, jun., governor of New England, he says:—

"For all sorts of agues, I have of late tried the following magnetical

experiment with infallible success. Pare the patient's nails when the fit is coming on, and put the parings into a little bag of fine linen or sarsanet, and tie that about a live eel's neck in a tub of water. The eel will die and the patient will recover. And if a dog or hog eat that eel they will also die."

He adds, "I have known one that cured all deliriums and frenzies whatsoever, and at once taking, with an elixer made of dew, nothing but dew purified and nipped up in a glass and digested 15 months till all of it has become a grey powder, not one drop of humidity remaining. This I know to be true, and that first it was as black as ink, then green, then grey, and at 22 months' end it was as white and lustrous as any oriental pearl. But it cured manias at fifteen months' end."

The sapient James I., of England, before he left his northern kingdom, was so profoundly agitated on hearing the rumour that one Agnes Sampson and two hundred other Scotch witches "had sailed in sieves from Leith to North Berwick church to hold a banquet with the devil," that he ordered the wretched woman to be put to the torture in his presence, and appeared to feel pleasure in questioning her during her suffering. It was afterwards affirmed that Agnes and her two hundred weird sisters "had baptised and drowned a black cat, thereby raising a dreadful storm," which had nearly proved fatal to a ship that carried the superstitious monarch. The poor woman, though she protested her innocence to the last, perished at the stake, supplicating in vain for mercy from the king and her Christian fellow-subjects. Strange to say, the second batch of witches condemned at Lancaster in 1633, but pardoned by Charles I., were accused of similarly interfering with the weather during a royal cruise. A letter in the State Paper Office, written May 16, 1634, by Sir William Pelham to Lord Conway, contains the following:—

"The greatest news from the country is of a huge pack of witches which are lately discovered in Lancashire, whereof 'tis said 19 are condemned, and that there are at least 60 already discovered, and yet daily there are more revealed: there are divers of them of good ability, and they have done much harm. I hear it is suspected that they had a hand in raising the great storm, wherein his Majesty [Charles I.] was in so great danger at sea in Scotland."

The writer of the article "Hertfordshire," in "Knight's Cyclopædia," has the following singular reference to the belief in witchcraft in that part of England, about the middle of last century:—

"There has been no public event since (*temp.* Charles I.) of any moment connected with the county; but a circumstance which occurred in April of the year 1751, deserves notice as marking the extent of popular ignorance and barbarity at that period. A publican near Tring being troubled with fits, conceived that he was bewitched by an old woman named Osborne. Notice was given by the crier that two witches were to be tried by ducking; and in consequence a vast mob assembled at the time appointed. The old woman and her husband, who had been in Tring workhouse, were removed into the church for safety; but the mob obtained possession of the old man and the old woman, whom they then dragged two miles to a muddy stream, ducked them and otherwise so maltreated them that the woman died on the spot, and the man with difficulty recovered. Thomas Colley, one of the perpetrators, was executed on the spot; but so strong was the infatuation of the populace, that it was thought necessary to have a guard of more than 100 troopers to escort the cavalcade to the place of execution."

Yes, the ignorance and infatuation had ceased to be "respectable," which fact, doubtless, has a marvellous influence on our mental and moral optics, when contemplating many other historical delusions, as well as those connected with supposed witches and their malevolent doings.

A singular instance of combined delusion and imposture with respect to witchcraft, is related in Ralph Gardiner's "malicious invective against the government of Newcastle-on-Tyne," entitled "England's Grievance Discovered in Relation to the Coal-Trade," and published in 1655. It appears that about five or six years previously, the magistrates of the borough had sent two of their sergeants into Scotland, "to agree with a Scotch-man, who pretended knowledge to find out Witches by pricking them with pins, to come to Newcastle, where he should try such who should be brought to him, and to have twenty shillings a peece for all he could condemn as witches, and free passage thither and back again." Many poor women were subjected to much indignity by this fellow, who caused them to be stripped partially naked, when he inserted pins into various parts of their flesh, to find a place from which no blood would issue, as he pretended. On one occasion, however, he was detected and compelled to acknowledge that a respectable woman, whom he had grossly treated and condemned, was "not a child of the Devil," as he had previously insisted. It appears that this worthy afterwards visited other parts of Northumberland, "to try women there, where he got

some three pound a peece." The author adds, "it was conceived if he had staid he would have made most of the women in the North Witches for mony." He gives the names of fifteen poor wretches who were hanged at Newcastle at this impostor's instigation, and says, "These poor souls never confessed anything, but pleaded innocence: And one of them by name Margaret Brown beseeched God that some remarkable sign might be seen at the time of their execution, to evidence their innocence, and as soon as ever she was turned off the ladder, *her blood gushed out upon the people to the admiration of the beholders!*" The said witch finder at length met with the fate he so richly merited. He was, in the words of the indignant author, "laid hold on in Scotland, cast into prison, indicted, arraigned, and condemned for such like villainie exercised in Scotland. And upon the gallows he confessed he had been the death of about two hundred and twenty women in England and Scotland for the gain of twenty shillings a peece, and beseeched forgiveness. And was executed." Singularly enough, our author himself met with a similar untimely fate, but for a very different crime, as appears from the following MS. note, in the copy of Gardiner's work before the present writer, purporting to be extracted from a "MS. Life of Barnes, p. 420":—"Upon some methods agreed on for reformation of Manners in the Town according to that clause in the charter which empowers them to make By-laws, there was one Gardiner writ a malicious Invective against the Government of Newcastle, but he got his Reward, being afterwards at York hanged for Coyning."

The celebrated "witchfinder," Hopkins, was equally unfortunate with his Scotch compeer. Some individuals, with more acumen than the superstitious masses, took it into their heads to experiment upon Hopkins himself. Accordingly they seized him, tied his thumbs and toes together, after his own fashion, when operating on others. On placing him on the water he swam as buoyantly as his victims. "This," says one writer, "cleared the country of him, and it was a great pity that they did not think of the experiment sooner." Hopkins's method of discovering witches is, at least, as old as the days of Pliny the elder.

In the "Covntrey Ivstice," by "Michael Dalton, Lincoln's Inn, Gent," published in 1618, are some curious illustrations of the state of the law with regard to witchcraft, at the period. The author says:—

"Now against these witches the Iustices of peace may not alwaies expect direct euidence, seeing all their works are the works of dark-

nesse, and no witnesses present with them to accuse them: And therefore for their better discouerie, I thought good here to insert certaine obseruations out of the booke of discouery of the Witches that were arraigned at Lancaster, *Ann. Dom.* 1612, before Sir *Iames Altham*, and Sir *Edw. Bromely* Iudges of Assise there.

"1. They haue ordinarily a familiar, or spirit, which appeareth to them.

"2. Their said familiar hath some bigg or place vpon their body, where he sucketh them.

"3. They haue often pictures of clay, or waxe (like a man, &c.) found in their house.

"4. If the dead body bleed, vpon the Witches touching it.

"5. The testimony of the person hurt, vpon his death.

"6. The examination and confession of the children or servants of the Witch.

"7. Their owne voluntary confession, which exceeds all other euidence."

Bodin, a French writer, in his "Demonomanie des Sorciers," published in 1587, says, "On half-proof or strong presumption, the judge may proceed to torture." The judge might, moreover, in his opinion, lie with impunity, and promise a suspected person a pardon on confession, without the intention of carrying it into effect. But this is not much from a man, who could cite with approval and even relish, the decision of a magistrate that a person "who had eaten flesh on a Friday should be burned alive unless he repented, and if he repented, yet he was hanged out of compassion." Yet this same Bodin was a Protestant, forsooth!

Walburgar, writing in the following century, is not much less tolerant of judicial mendacity. He does not, indeed, recommend direct lying, but equivocation. The judge may inform the suspected that her confession will induce in him favourable action, that a new house should be built for her, and that it will tend to the saving of her life. And yet, after the poor deluded creature has committed herself, he regards it as perfectly just and honourable that the sapient administrator of the law should inform her that his action in burning her will be favourable to the commonwealth, that her new house will be of wood at the stake, and that the destruction of her body will tend to the salvation of her soul!

In Würtzburg, as recently as 1749, a girl was burnt alive as a legally condemned practitioner of witchcraft. Witches were burned in Scotland till 1772, and in France in 1718. The severe acts passed

in the reign of James I., condemnatory of witchcraft, were not repealed till the 9th George II. (1736).

There appears to have been three kinds of witches—the black, the white, and the grey. The black had power only for evil, the white for good, and the grey possessed authority both in matters good and evil. These seem to have originally been merely personifications of the black, white, and grey-coloured clouds of the Aryan elemental conflicts. Perhaps Shakspere formed his principal group of three from the circumstance that the destiny of his hero was influenced to some extent by one of each class. Many altars, of the period of the Roman occupation, dedicated to the *deæ matres*, or mother goddesses, have been found in various parts of the north of England. It is believed they were introduced by Teutonic auxiliaries. These deities have undergone much change in their transference to more modern superstitions; but some of their attributes may be detected without difficulty. Mr. Thomas Wright, in "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," says:

"They are sometimes regarded as the three Fates—the *norni* of the north, the *wæleyrian* of the Anglo-Saxons (the weird sisters, transformed in Shakspere into three witches) disposing of the fates of individuals, and dealing out life and death. But they are also found distributing rewards and punishments, giving wealth and property, and conferring fruitfulness. They are the three fairies who are often introduced in the fairy legends of a later period, with these same characteristics."

I have said that many of the "theatrical properties" of mediæval witchcraft may be traced to an Aryan origin. The chief of these, the cauldron, is familiar to all from Shakspere's admirable pictures in Macbeth. I have previously referred to the fact that the phrase "brewing a storm" is derived from this source. Cauldron stories are common amongst ancient tribes. Guy of Warwick's "porridge pot" is of this class. Kelly says, speaking of the "genii of the lightning, the beings who brewed and lightned in the storm,"—

"If the Bhrigus or their associates were brewers they must needs have had brewing utensils; at the very least they must have had a brewing pot; and therefore we are justified in referring back the origin of the witches' cauldron to the remotest antiquity. Perhaps the oldest example of such a vessel of which there is any distinct record is the cauldron which Thor carried off from the giant Hymir, to brew drink for the gods at Oegir's harvest feast. It was five miles deep, and modern expounders of the Eddic myths are of opinion that it was the vaulted sky."

It must be borne in mind that the "heavenly liquor," so much vaunted, was neither more nor less than rain water, "brewed" by the action of the storm deities and their assistants, whether dignified by the name of soma, amrita, or nectar.

Robert Hunt, in his "Superstitions of Old Cornwall," describes the *modus operandi* of a celebrated witch at Fraddam, when engaged in brewing a liquor of "wondrous potency," which clearly exhibits the "elemental strife" that lies at the base of these superstitions. She "collected with the utmost care all the deadly things she could obtain, with which to brew her famous drink. In the darkest night, in the midst of the wildest storms, amidst the flashings of lightnings and the bellowings of the thunder, the witch was seen riding on her black ram-cat over the moors and mountains in search of her poisons. At length all was complete—the horse-drink was boiled, the hell-broth was brewed. It was in March, about the time of the equinox; the night was dark, and the King of Storms was abroad."

Olaus Magnus speaks of the storm-raising powers and propensities of the Scandinavian witches as amongst their most remarkable attributes.

The sieve, amongst all nations of the Aryan stock, and even of some others, has been regarded as a mythical implement of this class. Witches used them as boats, notwithstanding their inability to float on water. The supernatural, of course, easily overcame so trifling a physical difficulty. The premier weird woman in Shakspere's group, referring to the scoff she had received from a sailor's wife, says:—

> Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master of the Tiger;
> But *in a sieve I'll thither sail*,
> And, like a rat without a tail,
> I'll do, I'll do, I'll do.

It is not improbable that witch-sailing would be originally through the air rather than on the water. The sieve, amongst the Aryans, was a cloud emblem; the implement by means of which water was filtered into rain-drops. The upper regions were more affected by witches than the oceanic "waste of waters." In the opening scene in Macbeth, the well-known trio, at the conclusion of their *séance*, "hover through the fog and filthy air." They appear to have intimate relationship to the clouds and the weather:—

> 1*st Witch*—When shall we three meet again,
> In thunder, lightning, or in rain?
> 2*nd Witch*—When the hurly-burly's done;
> When the battle's lost and won.

Though unable to totally wreck the seaman's bark, the first witch assures her companions that "it shall be tempest toss'd." When Banquo asks Macbeth, "Whither are they vanished?" the latter answers :—

> Into the air; and what seemed corporal melted
> As breath into the wind.

In his letter to his wife, he likewise observes : "They made themselves—air, into which they vanished." Hecate, in the third act, after giving instructions to the weird host, says :—

> I'm for the air; this night I'll spend
> Unto a dismal and a fatal end.
> Great business must be wrought ere noon :
> Upon the corner of the moon
> There hangs a *vapourous drop* profound
> I'll catch, ere it come to the ground;
> And that distill'd by magic sleights,
> Shall raise such artificial sprights,
> As by the strength of their illusion,
> Shall draw him on to his confusion.

And previous to departing, Hecate further says :—

> Hark, I am called; my little spirit, see,
> *Sits in a foggy cloud*, and stays for me.

Hecate, in the classical mythology, is the Pandemonium name for Diana. This goddess was known by the latter appellation on earth, and by that of Luna in heaven. Hence the absurdity of converting her into a burly masculine basso in the so-called "Locke's music," introduced with very questionable taste into Shakspere's sublime tragedy of Macbeth. Proserpina, the wife of Pluto, is confounded with Hecate. She was supposed to preside over sorceries and incantations.

Grimm, although he, in one of his tales, speaks of "angels drawing water in a perforated vessel," seems not to have clearly interpreted the mythic import of the sieve. He, however, expressly says that it "appears to be a sacred archaic implement to which marvellous powers were attributed." Liebrecht speaks of a tribe of water-spirits, or cloud-gods, the Draci of Languedoc, with "hands perforated like colanders." The Grecian Naiads, with their urns, and the various river gods, from old Tiber or Ilissus to Father Thames, are but more artistic modifications of a similar thought.

There is a tradition, in the neighbourhood of Grimsargh, near Preston, to the effect that during some drought, "in the olden time,'

a gigantic dun cow appeared and gave an almost unlimited supply of milk, which saved the inhabitants from death. An old woman—of the witch fraternity, I suspect—however, with the view to obtain from the beast more than the usual number of pails-full, milked the cow with a sieve, riddle, or colander, which, of course, never became full, as the precious liquid passed through the orifices into a vessel below. When full, the latter was replaced by an empty one of a similar character. The tradition adds that the cow either died of grief, on detecting the imposture, or from sheer exhaustion, I forget which. A locality is still pointed out, named "Cow Hill," where gossips aver that, in relatively recent times, the huge bones of the said cow were disinterred. Over the porch of a house on the way from Goosnargh to Longridge, I remember, not very long ago, seeing a large bone, apparently a rib, placed in a conspicuous position. This was stated to have been a portion of the skeleton so disinterred. I fancied at the time that, in Polonius's phraseology, the bone in question was suggestive of something "very like a whale." It is not improbable, however, that at some early period, the remains of the huge extinct ox, the *bos primigenius*, or even the *elephas primigenius* or fossil mammoth, may have been exhumed in the neighbourhood of Grimsargh. Many bones and skulls of the former have been dredged from the bed of the Ribble, and others taken from the fluvial drift excavated in the valley when preparing for the foundations of the piers of the railway bridges in the neighbourhood of Preston. Bones of two species of fossil elephant, two species of rhinoceros, and other extinct pachyderms of huge dimensions, have recently been found in connection with early flint implements, indicative of the presence of man, in the fresh water gravel belonging to what Lyell terms the post-pliocene period of the earth's history, both in France and in several parts of England. Some such discovery, grafted upon the ancient Aryan tradition respecting the heavenly cows, or rain-giving clouds, opportunely rescuing the parched vegetation from premature decay, might very easily eventuate in such a tradition as the one current in Grimsargh at the present day.

Some of the deeds of the Saxon giant, the celebrated Guy of Warwick, appear to enshrine elements of myths of a similar character. In the "Huddersford Wiccamical Chaplet," we read :—

> By gallant Guy of Warwick slain
> Was Colbrand, that gigantic Dane.
> Nor could this desp'rate champion daunt
> A dun cow bigger than elephaunt :

But he, to prove his courage sterling,
His whinyard in her blood embrued.
He cut from her enormous side a sirloin,
And in his porridge-pot her brisket stew'd,
Then butcher'd a wild boar, and eat him barbicu'd.*

We have here the cow, or rain cloud, the boar, typical of the lightning, and the human giant or warrior substitute for Indra or Odin, in the Aryan and Teutonic mythologies.

The ribs of the gigantic dun cow, said to have been slain by the redoubtable Guy, are still preserved at Warwick. A similar rib is to be seen in the church of St. Mary Redcliffe, at Bristol, and another at Chesterfield. At an inn in Lincolnshire, a huge scapula is exhibited as a relic of the famous dun cow. The tradition at Bristol asserts that, at some former period, the said bovine monster supplied the whole of the city with milk. This coincides with the Grimsargh tradition. One Warwick legend too asserts that the cow had been driven mad by the overmilking of a witch. Another says that the cow was slain by Guy during a season of great scarcity, and that the consumption of its flesh saved the inhabitants from perishing of famine. The large rib in the Foljambe Chapel, Warwick, is said to measure seven feet four inches in length, and from twelve to thirteen inches in circumference. Frank Buckland, in his "Curiosities of Natural History," says, "the ribs of the dun cow at Warwick and the gigantic rib at St. Mary's Redcliffe Church, Bristol, are the bones of whales."

Tom Brown ("Amusements for the Meridian of London," 1700) mentions a remarkable superstitious reverence for the milk of a red cow. Referring to the Green Walk, St. James's Park, London, he says: "There were a cluster of senators talking of state affairs, and the price of corn and cattle, and were disturbed with the noisy Milk folk crying: 'A can of Milk, ladies; a can of *Red* Cow's Milk, sirs?' This appears to be a remnant of the Aryan reverence for the heavenly fire or the lightning, which they believed to be typified in the *red* breast of the robin, the red mutch of the woodpecker, and the red colour of other "fire-bringers."

In the Vedas, the dawn is symbolised by the goddess Ushas, by philologists regarded as the prototype of the Greek Eôs, and the Latin Aurora. The ruddy light on the eastern horizon which preceded the sunrise, was regarded as a herd of red cows attendant upon

* A pig roasted whole, seasoned with spices, and basted with wine, was said to be "barbecued." The term is believed to have been imported from the West Indies.

her. In the Vedic hymns she is sometimes addressed as a quail. Kelly says, "Vartikâ, the Sanscrit name of the bird, corresponds etymologically with ortyx, its Greek name; and in the myths of Greece and Asia Minor the quail is a symbol of light and heat."

The early Greek mythology has preserved some remains of this bovine personification of the ruddy dawn clouds. Mr. Gladstone, in "Juventus Mundi," says, "Although animal worship has played so considerable a part in the religions of the East, the traces of it in Homer are few, and, with one exception, they are also faint. That exception is the extraordinary sanctity attaching, in the Twelfth Odyssey, to the Oxen of the Sun, which I have treated as belonging to the Phœnician system, and as foreign to the Olympian religion." Notwithstanding this, the evidence in favour of the Aryan origin of the myth seems indisputable. Dr. Benisch, in one of his expositions of "Maimonides and Kimchito" to members of the Society of Hebrew Literature, on the 30th of March, 1871, stated that he was engaged in a comparison of the Semitic and Aryan tongues, with a view to establish many more points of contact than are usually admitted to exist between these two families of speech.

Red cow's milk is an important element in a recipe for the cure of consumption in Dr. Sampson Jones's "Medicine Boke," published in the latter portion of the seventeenth century. *Red* is especially mentioned as the colour of the heifer set apart for sacrifice for the purification of sin in Numbers, chapter 19; and *scarlet* is specified as the colour of one of the articles "cast into the midst of the burning of the heifer." Thousands of persons yet believe that there is more warmth in *red* flannel than in either black, white, blue, or yellow.

On some public-house signs it is not uncommon to refer to the liquor sold within as the "dun cow's milk." On one, between York and Durham, we read the following:—

> Oh, come you from the east,
> Oh, come you from the west,
> If ye will taste the Dun Cow's milk,
> Y'll say it is the best.

The Durham legend of St. Cuthbert's dun cow is well known in the North of England. The eccentric saint would not permit a cow to approach his sacred residence at Lindisfarne. He excused himself for this strange freak by averring that "where there is a cow there must be a woman, and where there is a woman there must be mischief." Has not the Scotchman's "mountain dew" some figurative relationship to the Aryan heavenly soma?

A belief in the influence of witches on the milk and butter yielding habits of cows is yet very widely entertained. In his "Ancient and Modern Manners of the Irish," Camden says: "If a cow becomes dry a witch is applied to, who, inspiring her with a fondness for some other calf, makes her yield her milk." He further observes that they slaughter all hares found amongst their cattle on May-day, from a belief that they are witches, who, having designs on their butter, have assumed this form the better to effect their purpose. Other authorities speak of the general belief in witches sucking the dugs of cows in the form of hares. A writer in the *Athenæum*, as recently as 1846, refers to a certain Scotch witch, who, he says, "has been seen a hundred times milking the cows in the shape of a hare." A Scotch witch, recently deceased, named Margery Scott, firmly believed that she had been frequently transmuted into a hare and hunted by dogs.

Mr. Robert Hunt, in his "Drolls, Superstitions, and Traditions of Old Cornwall," relates a very amusing story about "the witch of Treva." Being without food, the husband of the old crone, who doubted her pretended supernatural power, asked, as a proof to which he would yield, that she would walk to St. Ives and back, a distance of five miles, and procure some substantial human victuals. This she undertook to effect in the space of half-an-hour. The man kept his eye on her for some time, after she started on her strange errand, "and at the bottom of the hill he saw his wife quietly place herself on the ground and disappear. In her place *a fine hare* ran on at its full speed." He further adds that the woman returned within the prescribed time, and brought with her "good flesh and taties, all ready for aiting!" When the said crone was carried to her grave, she caused much amazement and even terror by her mad pranks. "When they were about half way between the house and the church, a hare started from the roadside and leaped over the coffin. The terrified bearers let the corpse fall to the ground, and ran away. Another lot of men took up the coffin and proceeded. They had not gone far when puss was suddenly seen seated on the coffin, and again the coffin was abandoned." After considerable labour and much tribulation, we are informed the parson commenced "the ordinary burial service, and there stood the hare, which, as soon as the clergyman began 'I am the resurrection and the life,' uttered a diabolical howl, changed into a black, unshapen creature, and disappeared!"

One of the Saxon forms of the goddess Freyja, according to Mannhardt, has hares for trainbearers, and another walks at night in the fields of Aargau, accompanied by a hare of silver-grey colour. The

prevalent superstition that a hare crossing the highway before any person prognosticated ill-fortune, doubtless, has its origin in the witchcraft association. Perhaps the story of the hare's nest, to which children are sent in search of eggs at Easter, in Swabia and Hesse, according to Meier, is the original of our "*mare's nest*," and has some reference to the supposed supernatural attributes of the animal. Mannhardt says the hare is reputed to be a fire and soul bringer; that many kinder-brünnen (baby fountains) are so named from this circumstance; and that children are supposed to be procured from the hare's form, as well as from the parsley bed. We learn from Cæsar that the Ancient Britons held the hare in reverence, and refused, therefore, to kill it for food.

Sir Jno. Lubbeck, Lyell and others are of opinion that to the existence of this feeling may be attributed the almost total absence of the bones of the hare amongst the debris of the ancient Swiss lake dwellings, and the kjökkenmödings or shell mounds of Denmark. The superstition yet exists amongst the Laplanders of the present day. According to Burton, the Somal Arabs reject it as the Hottentot men do, although their women may partake of it as food, and M. Schlegel informs us that the Chinese entertain a prejudice against the animal. Owing to a false impression respecting the hare chewing its cud, the Jews pronounced it to be unclean, and therefore rejected it as food. Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, when she had harangued her soldiers, opened the drapery around her bosom and let go a hare, which she had concealed. The frightened animal's antics, according to the then orthodox laws of divination, indicated a successful issue to the pending expedition. The warrior queen improved the occasion, led her enthusiastic troops against the highly disciplined Roman legions, and vanquished them.

Kelly is satisfied of the Aryan origin of the animal's supernatural reputation. He says,—"The hare is no doubt mythically connected with the phenomena of the sky, but upon what natural grounds it has been credited with such meteoric relations is a point not yet determined. I incline to think it will be found to lie, in part at least, in the habits which the animal displays about the time of the vernal equinox, and which have given rise to the popular saying, "as mad as a March hare." And perhaps this very restlessness in rough weather has been the cause of the animal being regarded as a disguised witch, actively engaged in "brewing storms."

Cats, as well as hares, have the reputation of being weather wise; hence their association with witches or "wise women." Hecate was

supposed to frequently assume the feline form. Shakspere's witches evidently held it in reverence. One says, with great solemnity, on a momentous occasion, "Thrice the brindled cat hath mew'd." A very strong belief yet obtains, amongst persons better educated than the Lancashire peasantry, that cats can see better in the dark than in the light, and that they possess nine lives, or, in other words, that they require killing nine times, before they remain permanently defunct. The author of "Choice Notes" says that sailors have a firm belief that the presence of a dead hare on board ship is certain to bring about bad weather. They likewise object to having cats on board, and when one happens to be more frisky than usual, like a "mad March hare," they have a saying that "the cat has got a gale of wind in her tail." The same authority says that the throwing of a cat overboard will infallibly bring on a storm. Mannhardt says, in Germany, anyone who, during his lifetime, may have made cats his enemies, is certain to be accompanied to the grave with wind and rain. A writer in *Notes and Queries* refers to a Dutch superstition of this class, in which a rainy wedding day is supposed to result from the bride's neglecting to feed her cat. Walter Kelly thinks "the question why the chariot of the goddess Freyja was drawn by cats, and why Holda was attended by maidens riding on cats, or themselves disguised in feline form, is easily solved. Like the lynx, and the owl of Pallas Athene, the cat owes its celestial honours above all to its eyes, that gleam in the dark like fire, but the belief in its supernatural powers may very probably have been corroborated by the common observation that the cat, like the stormy boar, is a weather wise animal."

This connection of the goddess Freyja (whence our Friday) with the feline personification of stormy weather, may lay at the root of the prejudice of sailors against commencing a voyage on that day. That this superstition has yet strong hold on the nautical imagination, was recently (1871), attested by the fact that, in consequence of the loss of the ill-fated turret-ship, "Captain," which had left port on a Friday, the "Agincourt," in order to satisfy the clamour of the crew, did not leave Gibraltar on the presumedly fatal day. The departure of the last-named war-ship on the Saturday, however, did not prevent her striking on the "Pearl Rock", shortly afterwards. This fact might, perhaps, stagger Jack's faith for a moment, but superstition is tougher than actual experience in many of its phases, and Friday will still be a black letter day in the sailor's calendar.

Hallam, in his "View of the State of Europe during the Middle

Ages," when discussing the probabilities of the guilt or innocence of the Knights Templars, concerning which there still exists great diversity of opinion, refers to the evidence adduced by M. von Hammer as the most difficult of refutation. This authority contends that the adoption of the infamous practices of the Gnostic superstition, which the Templars are said to have imported from the East, is proved by certain obscene sculptures found in secret places in edifices erected by the members of this order in various parts of Europe. He says these scandalous figures resemble those in the Gnostic churches. Hallam adds, however, "The Stadinghi, heretics of the thirteenth century, are charged, in a bull of Gregory IX., with exactly the same profaneness, even including the *black cat* [canis aut gattus niger] as the Templars of the next century. This is said by Von Hammer to be confirmed by sculptures." May not these coincidences have arisen from the common Aryan origin of the pagan superstitions; and, in some instances, at least, in the figurative meaning of the sculptures referred to? There was a famous "cat stone" in Leyland old church, which was said to be the "devil in the form of a cat," who "throttled" an individual that witnessed his removal, by night, of the stones used by the builders of the church in the day-time. The morals, as well as the manners, of the thirteenth century were very different to those of the nineteenth; and yet I could point out, within Lancashire and Cheshire, at least two instances, where obnoxious sculpture of this class has been preserved from mediæval times to the present day.

The notorious besom or broomstick is an instrument in the operations of witchcraft common to all the Aryan nations. According to the "Asiatic Register," for 1801, the Eastern, as well as the European witches, "practice their spells by dancing at midnight, and the principal instrument they use on such occasions is a broom." It is regarded as "a type of the winds, and therefore an appropriate utensil in the hands of the witches, who are wind makers and workers in that element."

Dr. Kuhn says, "In the Mark, an old broom is burned in order to raise a wind. Sailors, after long toiling against a contrary wind, on meeting another ship sailing in an opposite direction, will throw an old broom before the vessel, which, they contend, will reverse the wind, and consequently cause it to blow in their favour."

Burns, in his "Address to the Deil," makes his witches and warlocks "skim the muirs and dizzy crags" on "ragweed nags," "wi' wicked speed." Witches notoriously ride swiftly and easily through the

air astride of a broomstick.* Hence this superstition may be said to personify the light scudding clouds that pass rapidly across the sky, and herald squally weather. Dr. Kuhn regards the broom as the implement used by the Aryan demi-deities in sweeping the sky; for that such was a portion of the duty devolving upon its riders may be inferred from the still existing Hartz tradition that witches must dance away all the snow upon the Blocksberg, on the first of May.

The hanging out of a broom when a man's wife is from home, to intimate to the husband's unmarried friends that the usual matrimonial restraint is temporarily suspended, and that bachelor fare and bachelor habits will be the order of the day, for a time, is yet well known in Lancashire. I am not aware how far it is practised or understood in other parts of the country, neither have I been able to find a satisfactory explanation of its origin. As the "Lancashire witches" of the present day do "work their spells" upon their masculine friends, though in a more pleasing form and agreeable manner than their haggard and aged predecessors, it is not improbable that the emblem of power may have accompanied the transmission of the once dreaded appellation. Brooms, after being used in the performance of divers mythical ceremonies, were hung up in houses, and regarded, like pieces of the rowan or mountain ash-tree, as powerful charms against the entrance of evil doers. Perhaps the "bachelor husband" of by-gone times removed the broom to the outside of the house with the view to destroy its power over the interior, as well as to inform his roystering friends that the coast was clear, and that there existed no impediment to unlimited jollification.† Dr. Kuhn says in several parts of Westphalia, at Shrovetide, cows' horns are decorated with white besoms with white handles. After the house

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* The Pendle witches, on leaving Malkin tower, mounted their familiar spirits, in the form of horses, and quickly vanished.

† Since the above was written, I have noticed, in Larwood and Hotten's "History of Signboards," a representation of a public-house "bush" copied from a MS. of the fourteenth century. The implement, in this instance, is evidently a common broom or besom. Hence it is not at all improbable that the Lancashire Benedicts but hang out the earliest known tavern or inn sign. The authors of the work referred to say: "The bush certainly must be counted amongst the most ancient and popular of signs. Traces of its use are not only found amongst Roman and other old world remains, but during the middle ages we have evidence of its display." Kelly says "the broom must originally have been supposed, like the sieve, to be used for some purpose or other in the economy of the upper regions." Perhaps in the brewing of the "heavenly soma," and hence its appropriateness as an emblem of "good liquor" of a terrestrial character.

has been swept by them, they are hung, as a kind of talisman, over or near the door of the cow-house. Have these white besoms any relationship to those ornamental ones formerly much hawked in England by German peasant girls, who likewise sung in the streets the once popular song, "Buy a broom?"

Gaule says there were "eight classes of witches distinguished by their operations: first, the diviner, gipsy or fortune telling witch; second, the astrologian, star-gazing, planetary, prognosticating witch; third, the chanting, canting, or calculating witch, who works by signs or numbers; fourth, the venefick, or poisonous witch; fifth, the exorcist, or conjuring witch; sixth, the gastromantick witch; seventh, the magical, speculative, sciential, or arted witch; eighth, the necromancer."

Many of the practices of the modern gipsies seem to have much in common with the older witchcraft. Fortune telling, divination, &c., appear to be their chief professional avocations at the present time, notwithstanding the magisterial rigour to which such imposture is subjected. Much learned discussion has been evoked concerning the origin of this singular people. They appear to have been first generally noticed in Europe about the beginning of the fifteenth century. Some are said, however, to have arrived in Switzerland somewhat earlier. They were styled gipsies because they were believed to have wandered into Europe from Egypt. Their language, and their superstitions, however, show their true origin to have been Indian. Some writers contend that they left that country at the time of the celebrated Timour's invasion, early in the fifteenth century, and that their first resting place being in the country called Zinganen, near the mouth of the Indus, probably explains why in some countries they are called Zingari. Their next resting place being Egypt most probably gave rise to their English appellation. On the whole it seems not improbable that they spring from the pariahs or lowest caste of Hindoos, now named Suders. The glass globe or egg-shaped instrument, in which they profess to detect supernatural revelations, appears to belong either to the sun image or thunderbolt type of the Aryan mythology. Some of their conjuring, juggling, and other feats of skill are suggestive of a similar paternity. But the identity of the languages, in several essentials, notwithstanding much corruption of the gipsy dialects, in consequence of their admixture with those of other nations, is perhaps the most conclusive proof of the Hindoo origin of these Zingari tribes.

The superstitious belief in the supernatural yet exists in Lancashire,

as well as in other counties of England, to a much greater extent than highly educated people are apt to imagine. Gipsies ply their trade with profit, and "wise women" and witches are by no means extinct. The county of Somerset has recently furnished two remarkable illustrations of this. The following appeared in the public press in June, 1871 :—

"Lingering Superstition.—At Wincanton, in Somersetshire, the magistrates have had before them a charge arising out of the belief in witchcraft which still prevails in that county. Ann Green accused a labourer named William Higham of assaulting her. It appeared that the defendant had long laboured under the delusion that he was 'overlooked' by the complainant, and in order to break the spell he stabbed her twice. The sleeves of the garments which were worn by the complainant were produced in court, saturated with blood. The prisoner gravely informed the Bench that he did it to destroy Mrs. Green's power over him, but that he had not yet found any relief. The prisoner's mother said she had not been able to rest for a fortnight past, as he was constantly saying that Mrs. Green was 'overlooking' him, and that it would kill him. He was ordered to find sureties or to be imprisoned for three weeks."

The following "went the round of the papers" in July, 1870 :—

"A strange case of superstition has been brought before the magistrates of Wincanton, in Somerset. A young man named Lamb, fancying that a certain young woman, Mary Crees, had bewitched him, rushed upon her, seized her by the throat, and pulling out his penknife, attempted to wound her. In reply to the Bench he said, 'She overlooks I; that's as true as the hat's in my hand, and I wanted to draw blood to stop her.' Two years ago he fell down in a fit on seeing her."

The *Manchester Examiner and Times*, of June 24th, 1871, contained the following "short leader" :—

"The metropolitan police have been engaged in a laudable attempt at putting down fortune-telling. They made a 'raid' the other evening upon several professors of the cabalistic art, and in one house found thirty or forty young women waiting to have their 'fortunes told.' Perhaps the most important of the gentlemen arrested on the occasion was a Mr. George Shepherd, who, however, appeared in handbills printed for extensive circulation under the name of 'Professor Cicero, of Rome, Palestine, Jerusalem, and the Holy Land.' His rooms were fitted up with all the symbols of his craft, in every branch of which he professed to be an adept. The fees varied from

sixpence to half-a-crown, according to the nature of the service rendered, and a list was found in the place showing the number of visitors—that is, customers—in so many consecutive weeks. These figures, which have a certain interest as throwing light upon the prevalence of popular credulity, ran as follow: 662, 250, 502, 380, 512, 513, 430, 89, 466. In Easter-week, including Good Friday, there were only 217 callers, proving that the attractions of a holiday outweigh even those of a visit to a modern temple of divination. But the subject has a serious as well as a romantic side. The four 'Professors' were all 'found guilty,' and committed to gaol for three calendar months with hard labour. Probably no effectual stop will be put to a very silly practice until the dupes are convicted as well as the prime agents. It is perfectly well known that fortune-telling is illegal, and a penalty should attach to all who figure in the transaction, whether as seconds or principals."

The following appeared in a Manchester paper in 1865 :—

"Superstition in Salford.—At the Salford Town Hall, yesterday, John Rhodes, apparently a respectable man, living at 226, Regent Road, was charged, under the Vagrancy Act, with telling fortunes. A girl, named Ellen Cooper, stated that she saw the prisoner at his house, on Tuesday. After she had told him the date of her nativity, the prisoner cast her horoscope, and told her what she might expect would be her future fortune. For this she paid a shilling, which she understood was his regular charge. During the time the girl was there, several other females called on a similar errand, but did not stay. From information given by the girl, Cooper, two detective officers called at the prisoner's house on Thursday, where they found him with a female standing beside him, whose future destiny he was busy calculating, aided by an astrological work and a large slate. On the latter were what was apparently intended as a representation of the movements of the heavenly bodies. In the prisoner's house the officers found a large number of books, including 'An Introduction to Astrology,' by William Lilly; 'Raphael's Prophetic Alphabet'; 'Occult Philosophy,' by Cornelius Agrippa (in manuscript); a work on horary astrology, &c. Besides these, six large volumes were seized, which were filled with the names and the dates of the nativities of his clients, neatly surrounded, in each case, with hieroglyphics. In addition to these were manuscripts with forms of invocations to spirits to do the will and bidding of the invoker; also love spells, and forms for invoking evil destinies. The text of one of these was as follows :—'I adjure and command you, ye strong, mighty, and powerful

spirits, who are rulers of this day and hour, that ye obey me in this my cause by placing my husband in his former situation under the Trent Brewery Company, and I adjure you to banish all his enemies out of his way and to make them to crouch in humiliation unto him and acknowledge all the wrongs they have done unto him, and I bind you by the name of Almighty God, and by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by His precious blood, and on pain of everlasting damnation, that you labour for him and complete and accomplish the whole of this my will and desire, and not depart till the whole of this my will and desire be fulfilled, and when you have accomplished the whole of these my commands you shall be released from all these bonds and demands, and this I guarantee through the blood of the Redeemer and on pain of my future happiness. Let angels praise the Lord. Amen.' Amongst the papers found there was sufficient evidence that, amongst the prisoner's many hundreds of clients, there were those who moved in a sphere of life not peculiar to the poorer classes. Mr. Roberts defended the prisoner. Mr. Trafford said the practice was so mischievous that he could not let the prisoner off without some punishment; he must therefore send him to prison for seven days."

From the following, which appeared in the *New Zealand Herald* in 1865, it appears the belief in witchcraft produces serious results amongst the Maories:—

"From Kawhia we hear of wars and rumours of wars, instigated probably by the desire of the semi-friendly natives there to be put on rations and receive pay. Hone Wetere (John Wesley) late native magistrate there, who was deposed from his office four years ago for the abduction of a native woman, the wife of a sawyer named Wright, has been adding to the interest of native proceedings at the present time by the commission of a most brutal murder. It seems that this late learned interpreter of the law had, with a zeal worthy of Matthew Hopkins, condemned an old Maori woman of 'makutu,' or witchcraft, and punished her by his own hands, cutting off her head on the spot. This may appear to Auckland philo-Maories as something startling and, perhaps, out of the way, but to us here it is no extraordinary event. It is only a few years since two natives in our district murdered a man and woman for the same reason, and cooked a copper Maori over their grave. Much about the same time, at Kawhia, a native and his wife pulled the heart out of their living child under the impression that the poor infant was bewitched."

M. Paul B. Du Chaillu, in his "Journey to Ashango-land," relates

many striking instances of the popular belief in witchcraft which exists in Western Equatorial Africa. He says :—

"As usual I heard a harrowing tale of witchcraft in the course of the day. Few weeks pass away in these unhappy villages without something of this kind happening. A poor fellow was singing a mournful song, seated on the ground in the village street; and on enquiring the cause of his grief I was told that the chief of the village near his having died, and the magic doctor having declared that five persons had bewitched him, the mother, sister, and brother of the poor mourner had just been ruthlessly massacred by the excited people, and his own house and plantation burnt and laid waste." He describes at length the ceremonies attending the drinking of the mboundou, or the ordeal by poison, which he witnessed at Mayolo. If the poison kills the suspected person he is pronounced guilty; but if, as in three instances he witnessed, the drinker should, after severe spasms, vomit the deadly potion, he generally recovers, and is declared innocent of the charge of witchcraft preferred against him.

From these instances, and others which might be adduced, it is clear that this superstition is a very ancient and a very universal one, in some form, and therefore, not necessarily of exclusively Aryan origin; but that it may result from similar conditions to which humanity is, or has been, subjected in various parts of the globe. It is not impossible, however, that the African instances referred to may have some very remote connection with the Aryan superstitions of a similar character, for M. Du Chaillu expressly declares his belief that the ancestors of the present inhabitants of Western Equatorial Africa migrated from the east. He says :—"The migration of the tribes, as I have already observed, seems to have followed the same laws as migrations among ourselves; I did not meet with a single tribe or clan who said they came from the west; they all pointed to the east as the place they came from."

Mr. T. T. Wilkinson gives the following very graphic description of a Burnley witch, but recently deceased :—

"Most nations of all ages have been accustomed to deck the graves of their dead with appropriate flowers, much as we do at present. The last words of the dying have, from the earliest times, been considered of prophetic import; and, according to Theocritus, some one of those present have endeavoured to receive into his mouth the last breath of a dying parent or friend, '*as fancying the soul to pass out with it and enter into their own bodies.*' Few would expect to find this

singular custom still existing in Lancashire, and yet such is the fact. Witchcraft can boast her votaries in this county even up to the present date, and she numbers this practice amongst her rites and ceremonies. Not many years ago, there resided in the neighbourhood of Burnley, a female whose malevolent practices were supposed to render themselves manifest by the injuries she inflicted on her neighbours' cattle; and many a lucky-stone, many a stout horse shoe and rusty sickle, may now be found behind the doors or hung from the beams of the cow-houses and stables belonging to the farmers in that locality, which date their suspension from the time when this good old lady held the country side in awe. Not one of her neighbours ever dared to offend her openly; and if she at any time preferred a request it was granted at all hazards, regardless of inconvenience and expense. If in some thoughtless moment any one spoke slightingly either of her or her powers, a corresponding penalty was threatened as soon as it reached her ears, and the loss of cattle, personal health, or a general 'run of bad luck' soon led the offending party to think seriously of making peace with his powerful tormentor. As time wore on she herself sickened and died; but before she could 'shuffle off this mortal coil,' she must needs *transfer her familiar spirit* to some trusty successor. An intimate acquaintance from a neighbouring township was consequently sent for in all haste, and on her arrival was immediately closeted with her dying friend. What passed between them has never fully transpired, but it is confidently affirmed that at the close of the interview this associate *received the witch's last breath into her mouth, and with it the familiar spirit.* The dreaded woman thus ceased to exist, but her powers for good or evil were transferred to her companion; and on passing along the road from Burnley to Blackburn we can point out a farm-house at no great distance, with whose thrifty matron no neighbouring farmer will yet dare to quarrel."

This superstition respecting the reception of the spirit of the dying by inhaling the last breath, must have existed from a very remote antiquity. Psyche, the Greek personification of the soul, as a word, originally, simply meant breath. From the butterfly being the emblem of Psyche, the word became the name of the beautiful insect likewise. The Zulus call a man's shadow his soul, which would seem to be analagous to our churchyard ghost and the *umbra* of the Romans. The Zulus hold that a dead body can cast no shadow, because that appurtenance departed from it at the close of life.

CHAPTER VII.

FAIRIES AND BOGGARTS.

> There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your *philosophy!*
>
> *Shakspere.*

In my youthful imagination, some forty odd years ago, "boggarts," ghosts, or spirits of one kind or another, in Lancashire, appeared, to use Falstaff's phrase, to be "as plentiful as blackberries." "Boggart," by some writers is regarded as the Lancashire cognomen for "Puck" or "Robin Goodfellow." Certainly there are, or were, many boggarts whose mischievous propensities and rude practical jokings remind us very forcibly of the eccentric and erratic goblin page to the fairy king, so admirably delineated by Shakspere in his "Midsummer Night's Dream":—

> *Fairy*—Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
> Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite,
> Called Robin Goodfellow; are you not he
> That fright the maidens of the villagery;
> Skim milk; and sometimes labour in the quern,
> And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
> And sometimes make the drink to bear no barm;
> Mislead night wanderers, laughing at their harm;
> Those that hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,
> You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
> Are not you he?
>
> *Puck*—Thou speakest aright;
> I am that merry wanderer of the night,
> I jest to Oberon and make him smile,
> When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
> Neighing in likeness of a filly foal;
> And sometimes lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
> In very likeness of a roasted crab;
> And, when she drinks, against her lips I bob,
> And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.
> The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
> Sometimes for three-foot stool mistaketh me.

Ben Jonson makes Robin Goodfellow say—

"Sometimes I meet them like a man,
Sometimes an ox, sometimes a hound,
And to a horse I turn me can,
To trip and trot about them round.
But if to ride,
My back they stride,
More swift than wind away I go:
O'er edge and lands,
Through pools and ponds,
I whirry laughing, Ho! ho! ho!"

There is some diversity and variety of colouring in the various fairy types presented in different localities, but they have sufficient in common to justify perfect faith in their near relationship, whether they are styled Peris, as in Persia, Pixies, as in Devonshire, Ginns, as in Arabia, Gnomes or Elves, amongst the Teutons, or "the Leprachaun" or "Good people," of the sister Island. The finest modern artistic realisation of the fairy kingdom is unquestionably to be found in Shakspere's "Midsummer Night's Dream." How strangely, yet how beautifully and consistently, has he there woven together his etherial conceptions with the grosser, as well as with the more elevated aspect of our common humanity! How exquisite is the poetry in which the visions of his imaginations are embodied! The fairy-King Oberon thus describes his queen, Titania's, bower:—

I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
Where oxslips and the nodding violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine;
There sleeps Titania, some time of the night,
Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight,
And there the snake throws her enamelled skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in.

And again at the close of the play, Puck says—

Now it is the time of night,
That the graves all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite
In the church-way paths to glide:
And we fairies that do run
By the triple Hecat's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic.

Witches, fairies, ghosts, and boggarts seem to have become intimately amalgamated in the *repertoire* of modern superstition. Doubtless many of them have a common origin, and are but separate

developments, mythical or artistic, of the universal tendency of primitive peoples to personify, or render more tangible to the ruder sense, their conceptions of those forces of nature, the laws governing which are, to them, hidden in the delusive gloom of ignorance. "Feeorin" is a general term for all things of this character that create fear in the otherwise intrepid heart of a "Lancashire lad." Mr. Edwin Waugh, whose songs in the dialect are not more remarkable for their quaint humour and homely pathos than for their idiomatic truthfulness, aptly illustrates the mingling of the various supernatural terrors to which I have referred, in his admirable ballad, "What ails thee, my son Robin." The mother, alarmed at the lad's melancholy mood, says, inquiringly:—

Neaw, arto fairy-stricken;
Or arto gradely ill?
Or hasto bin wi' th' witches
I'th cloof, at deep o'th neet?

Robin replies—

'Tisn't lung o'th feeorin'
That han to do wi' th' dule;
There's nought at thus could daunt mo,
I'th cloof, by neet nor day;
It's yon blue een o' Mary's:
They taen my life away.

Queen Mab appears to have been equally as mischievous an elf as Puck. Shakspere says,—

This is that very Mab
That plats the manes of horses in the night,
And bakes the *elf-locks* in foul sluttish hairs,
Which, once entangled, much misfortune bodes.

Mab, however, like Puck, seems to have had a large element of humour in her composition, which is delineated with marvellous grace and brilliancy in the celebrated speech of Mercutio, in "Romeo and Juliet."

Boggarts, in some cases, appear to have been anything but unwelcome guests. King James I., in his "Dæmonologie," describes the spirit called a "brownie" as something that "appeared like a rough man, and haunted divers houses without doing any evile, but doing, as it were, necessarie turnes up and downe the house; yet some were so blinded as to beleeve that their house was all the sonsier, as they called it, that such spirits resorted there."

Mr. T. T. Wilkinson relates some good stories of Lancashire goblins, who are believed to have determined the sites of Rochdale,

Burnley, Samlesbury, and some other churches, by removing the stones and scaffolding of the builders in the night time. There is likewise a legend of this class in connection with the church at Winwich, near Warrington, and another at Whaley-bridge, in Derbyshire. Indeed, these goblin church builders are very common throughout the land. In some cases the sprite assumes the form of the arch-fiend himself. Referring to the famous boggart of Syke Lumb farm, near Blackburn, Mr. Wilkinson says:—

"When in a good humour, this noted goblin will milk the cows, pull the hay, fodder the cattle, harness the horses, load the carts, and stack the crops. When irritated by the utterance of some unguarded expression or marked disrespect, either from the farmer or his servants, the cream mugs are then smashed to atoms; no butter can be obtained by churning; the horses and other cattle are turned loose, or driven into the woods; two cows will sometimes be found fastened in the same stall; no hay can be pulled from the mow; and all the while the wicked imp sits grinning with delight upon one of the cross beams in the barn. At other times the horses are unable to draw the empty carts across the farm yard; if loaded they are upset; whilst the cattle tremble with fear, without any visible cause. Nor do the inmates of the house experience any better or gentler usage. During the night the clothes are said to be violently torn from off the beds of the offending parties, whilst, by invisible hands, they themselves are dragged down the stone stairs by the legs, one step at a time, after a more uncomfortable manner than we need describe."

Mr. Wilkinson relates an anecdote of a near relation of his own, who, although, "not more imbued with superstition than the majority," firmly believed that he had once seen "a real dwarf or fairy, without the use of any incantation. He had been amusing himself one summer evening on the top of Mellor Moor, near Blackburn, close to the remains of the Roman encampment, when his attention was arrested by the appearance of a dwarf-like man, attired in full hunting costume, with top boots and spurs, a green jacket, red hairy cap, and a thick hunting whip in his hand. He ran briskly along the moor for a considerable distance, when, leaping over a low stone wall, he darted down a steep declivity, and was soon lost to sight."

One of the best descriptions of a Lancashire boggart or bargaist * that I have met with, was written by the late Crofton Croker, and

* Sir Walter Scott thought *bargaist* to be the German *bahrgeist*, the spirit of the bier, alluding to its presence foretelling death. The word is variously written, *barguest* and

published in Roby's "Traditions of Lancashire." I may just remark, *en passant*, that the word "traditions," as applied to nearly the whole of these stories, is a sad misnomer. The tales might, perhaps with propriety, be termed *nouvelletes*, or little novels; but when put forth as "traditions," in the true acceptation of the term, they are worse than useless, for they are calculated equally to mislead both the antiquary and the collector of "folk lore." Croker makes the scene of his story what was once a retired and densely wooded dell, or deep valley, in the township of Blackley, near Manchester, called to this day, "Boggart Ho' Clough." This boggart sadly pestered a worthy farmer, named George Cheetham, by "scaring his maids, worrying his men, and frightening the poor children out of their senses, so that, at last, not even a mouse durst shew himself indoors at the farm, as he valued his whiskers, after the clock had struck twelve." This same boggart, however, had some jolly genial qualities. His voice, when he joined the household laughter, on merry tales being told and practical jokes indulged in, around the hearth at Christmastide, is described as "small and shrill," and as easily "heard above the rest, *like a baby's penny trumpet*." He began to regard himself at last as a "privileged inmate" and conducted himself in the most extraordinary manner, snatching the children's bread and butter out of their hands, and interfering with their porridge, milk, and other food. His "invisible hand" knocked the furniture about in the most approved modern style of goblin or spiritual manifestation. Yet, this mischievous propensity did not prevent him from occasionally performing some kindly acts, such as churning the cream and scouring the pans and kettles! Truly, he was a "tricksty sprite." Croker refers to one circumstance which he regards as "remarkable," and which will remind modern readers very distinctly of a "spiritual" exhibition which recently attracted much public attention. He says—"the stairs ascended from the kitchen; a partition of boards covered the ends of the steps, and formed a *closet* beneath the staircase. From one of the boards of this partition a large round knot was accidently displaced, and one day the youngest of the children, while playing with the shoe-horn, stuck it into this knot-hole. Whether or not the aperture had been formed by the boggart as a peep-hole to watch the

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boguest being amongst its forms. A very slight provincial change would make the latter *boguerst*, from whence, probably, the Lancashire boggart. The Cymric word bwg, which represents, according to Mr. Garnett, the modern bug, bugbear, and hobgoblin, has evidently intimate relation to the root of the word. This sprite is often confounded with others, and is subjected to much local variation.

motions of the family, I cannot pretend to say. Some thought it was, for it was called the boggart's peep-hole; but others said that they had remembered it before the shrill laugh of the boggart was heard in the house. However this may have been, it is certain that the horn was ejected with surprising precision at the head of whoever put it there; and either in mirth or in anger the horn was darted forth with great velocity, and struck the poor child over the ear." To say the least of it, it is rather remarkable that the mere substitution of the words *structure* or *cabinet* for *closet*, and *trumpet* for *horn*, to say nothing of the peculiar quality of the boggart's voice, should make the whole so eloquently suggestive of the doings of a certain "Mr. Ferguson" and his friends the Davenport Brothers, and other "spiritual manifestations" recently so much in vogue. All this supernatural mountebanking was, it appears, taken in good part by Mr. Cheetham's family, and when the children or neighbours wished for a little excitement they easily found it in "laking," that is, playing, with this eccentric and pugnacious disembodied spirit.*

But Mr. Boggart eventually returned to his old avocations, and midnight noises again disturbed the repose of the inmates of the haunted house. Pewter pots and earthen dishes were dashed to the floor, and yet, in the morning they were found perfectly uninjured, and in their usual places. To such a pitch at last did matters reach, that George Cheetham and his family were observed one day by neighbour John Marshall sullenly following a cart that contained their household goods and chattels. What transpired is best told in Mr. Croker's own words:—

"'Well, Georgy, and soa you're leaving th'owd house at last,' said Marshall.

"'Heigh, Johnny, my lad, I'm in a manner forced to it, thou sees,' replied the other, 'for that wearyfu' boggart torments us soa, we can neither rest neet nor day for't. It seems loike to have a malice agains t' young uns, an' it ommost kills my poor dame at thoughts on't, and soa, thou sees, we're forced to flit like.'

"He had got thus far in his complaint when, behold, a shrill voice, from a deep upright *churn*, the topmost utensil on the cart, called out, 'Ay, ay, neighbour, we're flitting, you see.'

"'Od rot thee,' exclaimed George, "If I'd known thou'd been flitting too, I wadn't ha' stirred a peg. Nay, nay, it's no use, Mally,'

*Query.—Has the Lancashire and Yorkshire word "lake," meaning "to play," anything in common with the modern word "larking," now so much in vogue?

he continued, turning to his wife, 'we may as weel turn back again to th'owd house, as be tormented in another not so convenient.'"

In Florence of Worcester's Chronicle, under the date, 1138, a singular story is related, which explains "how the devil, in the shape of a black dwarf, was made a monk." From some of the details, it appears to embody, in no slight degree, the popular superstition regarding the mischievous Puck. On three distinct occasions the cellars of a monastery at Prum, in the arch-diocese of Treves, had been invaded, bungs wantonly withdrawn from casks, and good wine spilled on the floor. The abbot, in despair, at length ordered the bungholes to be "anointed round with chrism." On the following morning "a wonderfully dwarfish black boy" was found "clinging by the hands to one of the bungs." He was released, dressed in a monk's habit, and made to associate with the other boys. He, however, never uttered a word, either in public or private, or tasted food of any kind. A neighbouring abbot pronounced him to be a devil lurking in human form; and, the chronicle informs us, "while they were in the act of stripping off his monastic dress, he vanished from their hands like smoke."

This sort of superstition was devotedly respected by even such men as Martin Luther. He tells us of a demon who officiated as *famulus* in a monastery. He was a good hand at an earthly bargain too, and insisted on having full measure for his money, when employed to fetch beer for the monks.

I remember in my youth hearing a story of a headless boggart that haunted Preston streets and neighbouring lanes. Its presence was often accompanied by the rattling of chains. I forget now what was its special mission. It frequently changed its form, however, but whether it appeared as a woman or a black dog, it was always headless. The story went that this boggart or ghost was at length "laid" by some magical or religious ceremony in Walton Church yard. I have often thought that the story told by Weaver, a Preston antiquary, in his "Funerall Monuments," printed in 1631, and which I have transcribed at page 149 of the "History of Preston and its Environs," may have had some remote connection with this tradition. He relates how Michael Kelly, the celebrated Dr. Dee's companion, together with one Paul Wareing, "invocated some of the infernal regiment, to know certain passages in the life, as also what might bee knowne by the devils foresight, of the manner and the time of the death of a noble young gentleman then in his wardship." He further relates how, on the following evening they dug up in Law

(Walton) Church yard, the corpse of a man recently buried, when, "by their incantations, they made him (or rather some evil spirit through his organs) to speake, who delivered strange predictions concerning the said gentleman." From the whole of this narration, it is evident that Weaver honestly believed some special sorcery or *diablerie* had been perpetrated in the localities referred to.

This belief that the devil made use of other organs than his own, in giving expression to his thoughts or opinions was shared in by the learned. Melancthon tells us of an Italian girl who was "possessed" with a devil, and who, although she knew no Latin, quoted Virgil fluently (at least Satan did through her organ of speech), when questioned by a Bolognese professor. This anecdote is rather unpleasantly suggestive of certain recent clairvoyant exhibitions.

Amongst other youthful terrors to which I remember being subjected, one had reference to a mythic monster styled "raw head and bloody bones." This boggart appeared to partake of the cannibal nature of some of the giants and ogres in our nursery tales, one of which, on the approach of the redoubtable "Jack, the Giant Killer," called out to his wife, "I smell fresh meat!" or according to the popular rhyme—

> Fee, fo, fam, I smell the blood of an Englishman!
> Be he alive or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to salt and bread!

The said "raw head and bloody bones," I was seriously informed, preferred to breakfast on the bodies of naughty children, nicely roasted! I can likewise remember well being told that boggarts especially loved to haunt and otherwise annoy those who refused to *believe* in their existence. After experience, I need scarcely say, has demonstrated the contrary to be much nearer the truth.

Mr. Edwin Waugh, in his "Grave of Grislehurst Boggart," gives a vivid picture of this species of superstition as it still exists in Lancashire. The story is admirably told in a conversation between the author, an old weaver and his dame, and is replete with characteristic traits. It seems this boggart, although it was supposed to be "laid" in the most orthodox manner, still troubled the neighbourhood. The old dame declares—"It's a good while sin it were laid; an' there were a cock buried wi'it, we a stoop (a stake) driven through it. It 're nooan settled with a little, aw'll uphowd yo."

"'And do you really think,' said the author, 'that this place has been haunted by a boggart?'

"'Has bin—be far!' replied the dame. 'It is neaw! Yodd'n soon find it eawt, too, iv yo live't oppo th' spot. It's very mich iv it wouldn't may yor yure fair ston of an end, othur with one marlock or

another. There's noan so mony folk oppo this country side at likes to go deawn yon lone at after delit (daylight), aw con tell yo.'

"'But it's laid and buried,' replied the author, 'it surely doesn't trouble you much now.'

"'Oh, well,' said the old woman, 'iv it doesn't, it doesn't; so there needs no moor. Aw know some folk winnut believe sich things; there is some at'll believe naught at o' iv it isn't fair druven into um, wilto, shalto; but this is a different case, mind yo. Eh, never name it; thoose at has it to dhyel wi knows what it is; but thoose at knows naught abeawt sich like—whau, it's like summat an' nawt talkin' to 'um abeawt it; so we'n e'en lap it up where it is.'"

This boggart, from its doings, appears to have been an exact counterpart of George Cheetham's plague. On Mr. Waugh inquiring if the weaver never thought of digging into the grave in order to satisfy his curiosity on the matter, the old lady broke in with—"Naw; he'll delve noan theer, nut iv aw know it. . . . Nor no mon elze dar lay a finger oppo that greawnd. Joseph Fenton's a meeterly bowd chap, an' he's ruvven everything up abeawt this country side, welly, but he dar not touch Gerzlehus' Boggart for his skin! An' I howd his wit good, too, mind yo!"

The Grislehurst dame seems to have placed some emphasis on the fact, when their ghost or boggart was "laid," that "there was a cock buried wi' it." This ceremony resulted, doubtless, from a lingering remnant of the ancient and almost universal superstition that the soul departeth from the body in the form of a bird. This Dr. Kuhn regards as intimately connected with the Aryan belief respecting birds being soul-bringers. I am not aware, however, whether the barn-door fowl is included amongst the numerous lightning birds, which Kelly describes as having "nestled in the fire-bearing tree," of which the clouds formed the foliage, and the sun, moon, and stars the fruit.

In Willsford's "Nature's Secrets" (1658), is, however, the following passage, which shows the connection of the common fowl with stormy weather:—

"The vigilant cock, the bird of Mars, the good housewife's clock and the Switzer's alarum, if he crows in the day-time very much, or at sun-setting, or when he is at roost at unusual hours, as at nine or ten, expect some change of weather, and that suddenly, and that from fair to foul, or the contrary; but when the hen crows, good men *expect a storm within doors and without.* If the hen or chickens in the morning come late from their roosts (as if they were constrained by hunger), it presages much rainy weather."

The Romans used fowls in divination. Mohammed, too, is said to have included amongst his domestic pets a white cock, which he regarded as his friend, and considered that it protected him from the machinations of witchcraft, of genii and devils, and of the evil eye.

Mr. T. T. Wilkinson relates a curious anecdote, which he had, a few years ago, from a respectable gentleman, in the neighbourhood of Burnley, about "killing a witch." His informant was one of the farmers engaged in the mystical ceremony, the object of which was the destruction of a wizard who had wrought sad havoc amongst his neighbours' cattle. He says:—"They met at the house of one of their number, whose cattle were then supposed to be under the influence of the wizard; and, having procured a live cock chicken, they stuck him full of pins and burnt him alive, whilst repeating some magical incantation. . . . The wind suddenly rose to a tempest, and threatened the destruction of the house. Dreadful moanings, as of some one in intense agony, were heard from without, whilst a sense of horror seized upon all within. At the moment when the storm was at the wildest, the wizard knocked at the door, and, in piteous tones, desired admittance. They had previously been warned, by the 'wise man' they had consulted, that such would be the case, and had been charged not to yield to their feelings of humanity by allowing him to enter." The violent death of the cock, it appears, was necessary *to raise the storm.* The sequel of the story informs us that exposure to its violence killed the presumed wizard in the course of a week.

There is a superstition in Cornwall that the crowing of a cock at midnight indicates that the angel of death is passing over the house. Mr. Hunt relates the following anecdote, from which it appears that chanticleer is largely credited in that district with supernatural attributes:—

"A farmer in Towednack having been robbed of some property of no great value, was resolved, nevertheless, to employ a test which he had heard the 'old people' resorted to for the purpose of catching a thief. He invited all his neighbours into his cottage, and when they were assembled, he placed a cock under the 'brandice' (an iron vessel formerly much employed by the peasantry in baking, when this process was carried out on the hearth, the fuel being furze and ferns). Every one was directed to touch the brandice with his, or her third finger, and say, 'In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, speak.' Every one did as they were directed, and no sound came from beneath the brandice. The last person was a woman, who

occasionally laboured for the farmer in his fields. She hung back, hoping to pass unobserved amidst the crowd. But her very anxiety made her a suspected person. She was forced forward, and most unwillingly she touched the brandice, when, before she could utter the words prescribed, the cock crew. The woman fell faint on the floor, and, when she recovered, she confessed herself to be the thief, restored the stolen property, and became, it is said, 'a changed character from that day.'"

Shakspere appears to have been fully aware of the prevalence of a superstition which attributed to ghosts and wandering spirits a wholesome dread of the sonorous tones of chanticleer's early morning song. In the first scene in Hamlet, on the departure of the ghost, Bernardo says :—

> It was about to speak when the cock crew.

Horatio answers :—

> And then it started like a guilty thing
> Upon a fearful summons. I have heard
> The cock that is the trumpet of the morn,
> Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat,
> Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,
> Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
> The extravagant and erring spirit hies
> To his confine: and of the truth herein
> This present object made probation.

To which Marcellus adds :—

> It faded on the crowing of the cock.
> Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes,
> Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
> This bird of dawning singeth all night long:
> And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad.
> The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
> No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
> So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

And again, Puck, in A Midsummer Night's Dream, referring to the morning star or early dawn, which awakeneth chanticleer, says :—

> My fairy lord, this must be done with haste;
> For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
> And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
> At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
> Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,
> That in cross-ways and floods have burial,
> Already to their wormy beds are gone;
> For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
> They wilfully themselves exile from light,
> And must for aye consort with black-browed night.

Not so, however, with the fairies, for Oberon rejoins:—

> But we are spirits of another sort:
> I with the morning's love have oft made sport;
> And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
> Even till the eastern gate, all fiery red,
> Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
> Turns into yellow gold his salt-green streams.

The cock was one of the attendants or emblems of Æsculapius or Asclêpius, the god of medicine of the Greek mythology, and this fowl was commonly sacrificed to him. In addition to his knowledge in the art of healing disease, he possessed the power of raising the dead to life. He was believed to be the son of Apollo. According to Plato, the last words of Socrates were, "Criton, we owe a cock to Asclêpius." This bird, as well as the serpent, was one of his sacred emblems.

The Roman god Janus is regarded by many to be in some respects a Latin form of the Greek Asclêpius. He opens the year and the daily morning, and is the porter of heaven. One of his peculiar emblems was a cock, by the means of whose matutinal song he was supposed to announce the approach of the dawn.

The crowing of a cock of the colour of gold is to be the signal of the dawn of *Ragnavock*, "the great day of arousing," according to Scandinavian mythology. A black cock is likewise said to crow in the *Niflheim*, or "land of gloom."

J. Bossewell, in "Workes of Armourie" (1597), says:—"The lyon dreadeth the white cocke, because he breedeth a precious stone called allectricium, like to the stone that bright Calcedonius, and for that the cocke beareth such a stone, the lyon specially abhorreth him." The stone referred to was said to be similar to a dark crystal, and about the size of a bean.

A most astounding story affirming the supernatural attributes of chanticleer is related in Pinkerton's "General Collection of Voyages and Travels." In the "Voyage to Congo," a Capuchin "missioner," named Father Morolla, relates the following remarkable incident with the utmost gravity and evidently with perfect faith in the veracity of the story:—On the capture of a certain town by the army of Sogno, a large cock was found with an iron ring attached to one of its legs. The unfortunate rooster was speedily placed in the pot and boiled in the most orthodox fashion. When, however, his captors were about to commence their improvised feast, to their astonishment the cooked "pieces of the cock, though sodden and near dissolved, began to move

about, and unite into the form they were in before, and being so united, the restored cock immediately raised himself up, and jumped out of the platter upon the ground, where he walked about as well as when he was first taken. Afterwards he leaped upon an adjoining wall, where he became new-feathered all of a sudden, and then took his flight to a tree hard by, where, fixing himself, he, after three claps of his wings, made a most hideous noise, and then disappeared. Every one may imagine what a terrible fright the spectators were in at this sight, who, leaping with a thousand Ave-Marias in their mouths from the place where this had happened, were contented to observe most of the particulars at a distance."

The fabulous animal, the cockatrice, was believed to result from a "venomous egg" laid by an aged cock, and hatched by a toad. The monster had the head and breast of the dunghill champion, and "thence downwards the body of a serpent." Toads are frequently referred to by old writers in connection with witches and witchcraft.

In a MS. "Medycine Boke," belonging to Dr. Sampson Jones, of Bettws, Monmouthshire (1650-90), is the following strange recipe, entitled, "Cock water for a consumption and cough of the lungs":— "Take a running cock and pull (pluck) him alive, then kill him and cutt him in pieces and take out his intrals and wipe him cleane, breake the bones, then put him into an ordinary still with a pottle of sack and a pottle of red cow's milk," etc., etc.

The mythical character and medical qualities of red cow's milk have been referred to in the previous chapter.

Lightning birds were supposed to come "down to earth either as incorporations of the lightning, or bringing with them a branch charged with latent or invisible fire." The eagle or the falcon was the form which Agni, the fire-god, assumed on such occasions. The fire-birds were very numerous, and included the woodpecker, the robin, the wren, the owl, the cuckoo, the stork, the swallow, and the hoopoe. Kelly quotes the Herefordshire rhyme as evidence that the ancient superstition respecting the wren is still alive in England, as well as in France, Scotland, Wales, and the Isle of Man. The peasants there say:—

Robin Redbreast and Jenny Wren
Are God Almighty's cock and hen.

In Lancashire, however, the rhyme is:—

A robin and a wren
Are God's cock and hen.

And it is generally followed by the intimation that

> A spink and a sparrow
> Are the devil's bow and arrow.

To kill or rob the nests of these sacred birds was supposed to hazard the destruction of the culprit's residence by lightning. A Cornish rhyme says :—

> Those who kill a robin or a wran
> Will never prosper, boy or man.

In the "laying" of the redoubted Grislehurst boggart, it is not improbable, as ghosts are not easily coffined in a corporeal sense, that some superannuated old rooster, who had disturbed the bodily rest, and scared the wits of the neighbouring rustics by some untoward cock-a-doodle-doing, furnished all that was really "laid" in the mysterious grave referred to. An impression may have been entertained that the troublesome elf who had turned the household topsy-turvy had made the said rooster's corpus his temporary earthly tabernacle. Perhaps the "wise men" of the hamlet vainly imagined that nought was required but the driving of a "stoop" through the feathered repository to utterly "squelch" its ghostly occupant.

Since the above was written, a paragraph from the *Carnatic Telegraph* has "gone the round of the press," relating to the "casting out of devils," as at present practised in India. From this, it appears that the cock is, with the Hindoos as with the Lancashire peasant, a most potent instrument in the subjugation of troublesome spirits. The Hindoo exorcist tied his patient's hair in a knot, and then with a nail attached it to a tree. Muttering some "incantatory" stanzas, he seized a live cock, and, holding it over the poor girl's head with one hand, he, with the other, cut its throat. The blood-stained knot of hair was left attached to the tree, which was supposed to detain the demon. It is firmly believed that one "or a legion thus exorcised will haunt that tree till he or they shall choose to take possession of some other unfortunate."

In a work published in 1869, entitled "Count Teleki; a Story of Modern Jewish Life and Customs, by Eca," the author describes a ceremony called the "Keparoth or atoning sacrifice," in which the common barn-door fowl plays an important part. The penitent "whirled a cock around his head, saying, 'This is my atonement, this is my ransom. This cock goeth to death, but may I be gathered and enter into a long and happy life and into peace.' This he repeated three times. . . . The sacrifice consists of a cock for the male,

and a hen for a female. A white fowl is preferred to any other, in allusion to the words of the prophet, 'Though your sins be as scarlet they shall become white as snow.' A pregnant woman takes three, two hens and one cock, one hen for herself and the other two for the unborn infant—the hen lest it should be a girl, and the cock lest it should be a boy." The fowls are immediately afterwards handed over to the Jewish butcher to be killed.

A yet very prevalent superstition asserts that a person at the point of death finds serious difficulty in "shuffling off this mortal coil" should there happen to be any game cock feathers in the bed on which he lies. Pigeons' feathers are likewise said to prolong the agonies of death.

In France, a black cock is the chief instrument employed to raise the devil, and extract from the fiend sums of money. The incantation must be performed at a locality where four roads meet or two cross each other.

Mr. Wilkinson, referring to the Hothersall Hall boggart, says it "is understood to have been '*laid*' under the roots of a large laurel tree, at the end of the house, and will not be able to molest the family so long as that tree exists. It is a common opinion in that part of the country that the roots have to be moistened with milk on certain occasions, in order to prolong its existence, and also to preserve the power of the spell under which the goblin is laid."

The laurel here appears to be invested with the mythical properties of the ash and the rowan trees, which were supposed to possess irresistible power over "witches, fairies, and other imps of darkness." The author of "Choice Notes" quotes an Aberdeenshire couplet, which asserts that

> Rowan, ash, and red thread
> Keep the devils frae their speed.

and further adds :—"It is a common practice with the housewives in the same district to tie a piece of red worsted thread round their cows' tails previous to turning them out to grass for the first time in the spring. It secures their cattle, they say, from an evil eye, from being elfshot by fairies, etc." The red thread is here, like the berries of the rowan, the mutch of the woodpecker, the red breast of the robin, etc., in the Aryan myths, typical of the lightning.

In many nooks and corners of Lancashire, and some other parts of England, other stories may be found, many of which point to the Puck or Robin Goodfellow of the fairy mythology as their most probable prototype.

Roby says:—"The English Puck (the Lancashire Boggart), the Scotch Bogie, the French Goblin, the Gobelinus of the Middle Ages, and the German Kobold, are probably only varied names for the Grecian Khobalus,—whose sole delight consists in perplexing the human race, and evoking those harmless terrors that constantly hover round the minds of the timid. So, also, the German Spuck, and the Danish Spogel, correspond to the northern Spog; whilst the German Hudkin, and the Icelandic Puki, exactly answer to the character of the English Robin Goodfellow."

These English domestic sprites or elves that seem to claim a species of kinship to those they alternately torment and render substantial aid, clearly find their counterparts in the ghost and fairy lore of other nations. Kelly says, "Many similar tales are told of the German Zwergs, or dwarfs, who are the same race of little people as the elves and fairies that live in the hearts of green hills and mounds in Great Britain and Ireland. Often does it happen that a whole colony of these Zwergs effects an exodus from a German district, because the people have given them some offence, or 'have become too knowing for them;' and on these occasions there is always a river to be crossed." This was ever a difficulty, but not an unconquerable one, with the German elves. In England and Scotland a certain class of goblin or ghost found a running stream an impassable barrier. Poor Tam o'Shanter's mare Meg demonstrated the truth of this by the sacrifice of her caudal appendage. Grimm says that many facts tend to show a near relationship between elves of this class and the souls of men. The ordinary ghosts of the present day, whether voluntary visitors or obedient servants of "spirit mediums," are supposed to be the souls of the departed. Kelly says, on the authority of Kuhn and Schwartz, "Some of the many names by which the Zwergs are known in North Germany mean the 'ancients' or the 'ancestors,' and mark the analogy between the beings so designated and the Hindoo Pitris or Fathers; whilst other names—Holden (*i.e.*, good, kind) in Germany; good people, good neighbours, in Ireland and Scotland—connect the same elves with the Manes of the Romans." The Pitris of the Hindoos seem to furnish the germ of "good fairies," the fairy godmother, the Persian Pepis, the Arabic Ginns, the chief of the followers of Oberon and Titania, and of the kindlier phase in the character of Puck, Robin Goodfellow, or the Lancashire bogie, or domestic boggart, but the larking propensity of this sprite may possibly have resulted from a more modern addition to the spirit lore of the Northern Aryan people.

Mr. Jno. Aubery, Fellow of the Royal Society, in his "Miscellanies," published in 1696, gives what he styles "a Collection of Hermetic Philosophy," which exhibits an astonishing amount of superstition, even amongst the presumedly learned men of the age. Amongst other things he informs his readers, on the authority of a letter from a "learned friend," in Scotland, that a certain Lord Duffin was suddenly transported, by fairies, from his residence in Morayshire, and that he was "found the next day in Paris, in the French king's cellar, with a silver cup in his hand!" Such a feat was worthy of the sprite who could put a "girdle round the earth in forty minutes." Truly, as Ben Johnson's Puck says, he could "travel swifter than the wind with a load of humanity on his back."

Our ordinary stories of church-yard ghosts, and other apparitions and "spiritual manifestations," have much more in common with the "folk-lore" of classical antiquity than is generally known. There is a story told by Pliny the younger, which so much resembles many that we have heard in youth, that nothing is required but a change of name, place, and date, to thoroughly domesticate it amongst us. It is related as follows, in Melmoth's translation of Pliny's letters:

"There was at Athens a large and spacious house which lay under the disrepute of being haunted. In the dead of the night a noise resembling the clashing of iron was frequently heard, which, if you listened more attentively, sounded like the rattling of chains; at first it seemed at a distance, but approached nearer by degrees; immediately afterwards a spectre appeared in the form of an old man, extremely meagre and ghastly, with a long beard and dishevelled hair, rattling the chains on his feet and hands. . . . . By this means the house was at last deserted, being judged by everybody to be absolutely uninhabitable; so that it was now entirely abandoned to the ghost. However, in hopes that some tenant might be found who was ignorant of this great calamity which attended it, a bill was put up giving notice that it was either to be let or sold. It happened that the philosopher Athenodorus came to Athens at this time, and, reading the bill, inquired the price. The extraordinary cheapness raised his suspicion; nevertheless, when he heard the whole story, he was so far from being discouraged that he was more strongly inclined to hire it, and, in short, actually did so. When it drew towards evening, he ordered a couch to be prepared for him in the fore part of the house, and, after calling for a light, together with his pen and tablets, he directed all his people to retire. But that his mind might not, for want of employment, be open to the

vain terrors of imaginary noises and spirits, he applied himself to writing with the utmost attention. The first part of the night passed with usual silence, when at length the chains began to rattle; however he neither lifted up his eyes nor laid down his pen, but diverted his observation by pursuing his studies with greater earnestness. The noise increased, and advanced nearer, till it seemed at the door, and at last in the chamber. He looked up, and saw the ghost exactly in the manner it had been described to him; it stood before him, beckoning with his finger. Athenodorus made a sign with his hand that it should wait a little, and then threw his eyes again upon his papers; but, the ghost still rattling his chains in his ears, he looked up, and saw him beckoning as before. Upon this he immediately arose, and, with the light in his hand, followed it. The ghost slowly stalked along, as if encumbered with his chains, and turning into the area of the house, suddenly vanished. Athenodorus, being thus deserted, made a mark, with some grass and leaves, where the spirit left him. The next day he gave information to the magistrates, and advised them to order that spot to be dug up. This was accordingly done, and the skeleton of a man in chains was there found; for the body having lain for a considerable time in the ground, was putrefied and mouldered away from the fetters. The bones, being collected together, were publicly buried, and thus, after the ghost was appeased by the proper ceremonies, the house was haunted no more."

I was forcibly struck with the peculiarly Eastern character of a traditionary observance related to me during my investigation of the remains found in the ancient British tumulus at Over Darwen, in Lancashire, in November, 1864. I was informed that the country people spoke of the mound as a locality haunted by "boggarts," and that children were in the habit of taking off their clogs or shoes, under the influence of some such superstitious feeling, when walking past it in the night time.

Keppel, in his "Visit to the Indian Archipelago," refers to a somewhat similar superstition in Northern Australia. The natives will not willingly approach graves at night alone; "but when they are obliged to pass them, they carry a fire stick to keep off the spirit of darkness."

It is perhaps scarcely necessary that I should refer to the fact that recent naturalists have satisfactorily demonstrated that the green circles termed "fairy rings," have nothing "supernatural" in their character, being simply a result of the growth of a species of fungus. Not long ago, "the learned" contended that they resulted from some

obscure kind of electric action. Sir Walter Scott, who held this opinion, sneeringly refers to them as "electrical rings, which vulgar credulity supposes to be traces of fairy revels." Thousands of English peasants, yes, and many presumedly much wiser people, nevertheless, yet firmly adhere to the ancient faith. Singularly enough, Shakspere seems almost to have intuitively guessed at their true origin. When Prospero, for the last time invokes the aid of the supernatural, he exclaims :—

> Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves ;
> And ye that on the sands with printless feet
> Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him
> When he comes back ; you demi-puppets, that
> By moonshine do the green-sour ringlets make,
> Whereof the ewe not bites ; and you, whose pastime
> Is to make *midnight mushrooms.*

CHAPTER VIII.

FERN-SEED AND ST. JOHN'S-WORT SUPERSTITIONS.

I had
No medicine, sir, to go invisible,
No fern-seed in my pocket.
Ben Jonson.

Most peoples have, in some form or other, preserved the traditionary superstition that fern-seed was miraculously endowed with the power of rendering its possessor invisible. The great hero of our boyish days, the redoubtable "Jack, the giant-killer," had his "coat of darkness," which conferred upon its proprietor this marvellous peculiarity. In the classical mythology, the helmet given to Hades or Pluto likewise possessed the power of rendering the wearer invisible. In the Teutonic, the "invisible cap" of the Nibelungenlied possessed a similar property.

Shakspere makes Gadshill allude to it in a metaphorical sense. He is anxious to impress upon the mind of the chamberlain of the hostelry, near the scene of Falstaff's famous robbing exploit, that although he was engaged in an illegal enterprise, he was in league with companions of such high social status that the officers of the law would be unable to perceive their criminality if detected. He says:—"We steal as in a castle, cock-sure; we have the receipt of fern-seed, we walk invisible." Beaumont and Fletcher, in the "Fair Maid of the Inn," have the following reference to this superstition:—

Had you not Gyges' ring?
Or the herb that gives invisibility?

In a curious tract, published in the reign of Elizabeth, entitled "Plaine Percevall, the Peacemaker," the following passage occurs:—"I thinke the mad slave hath tasted on a fernstalke, that he walkes so invisible."

Fairies, of course, possessed the power of rendering themselves

visible, or otherwise, at pleasure. Oberon, in A Midsummer Night's Dream, says :—

> But who comes here ?
> I am invisible, and I will
> Overhear their conference.

Spirits of any class, of course, possessed this power, and its complement, that of being visible, at pleasure. Prospero, in the Tempest, says to Ariel :—

> Go make thyself like to a nymph o' the sea ;
> Be subject to no sight but mine ; invisible
> To every eyeball else.

All ferns, according to German authorities, and especially the "seed" thereof, possessed the quality usually described as "luck bringing." According to Panzer, the devil was compelled to fulfil the wish of any person in possession of the seed of this plant ; and Meier tells us that in Swabia the peasants believe that the possession of this seed, obtained from his Satanic majesty between the hours of eleven and twelve o'clock on Christmas night, will enable one man to do the work of twenty or thirty others not so favoured. Browne, in his "Britannia's Pastorals," speaks of "the wonderous one night seeding ferne ;" and Richard Bivot, in his "Pandæmonium," published in 1648, quaintly informs us that "much discourse hath been about gathering of fern seed (which is looked upon as a magical herb) on the night of Midsummer-eve ; and I remember I was told of one who went to gather it, and the spirits whisk't by his ears like bullets, and sometimes struck his hat and other parts of his body ; in fine, although he apprehended he had gotten a quantity of it, and secured it in papers, and a box besides, when he came home he found all empty."

Kelly says,—"The summer solstice is a favourite season for gathering plants of the lightning tribe, and particularly the springwort and fern. It is believed in the Oberpfalz that the springwort, or St. John's wort (johanniswurzel) as some call it, can only be found among the fern on St. John's night. It is said to be of a yellow colour, and to shine in the night like a candle ; which is just what is said of the mandrake in an Anglo-Saxon manuscript of the tenth or eleventh century. Moreover, it never stands still, but hops about continually, to avoid the grasp of men. Here, then, in the luminosity and power of nimble movement attributed to the springwort, we have another remarkable tradition signifying the transformation of the lightning into the plant."

The following translation from a German poem, beautifully illustrates the Teutonic form of this superstition :—

The young maid stole through the cottage door,
And blushed as she sought the plant of power.
"Thou silver glow-worm, O lend me thy light,
I must gather the mystic St. John's-wort to-night;
The wonderful herb whose leaf will decide
If the coming year shall make me a bride!"
And the glow-worm came
With his silvery flame,
And sparkled and shone
Through the night of St. John.
And soon as the young maid her love-knot tied
With noiseless tread
To her chamber she sped,
Where the spectral moon her white beams shed,
"Bloom here, bloom here, thou plant of power,
To deck the young bride in her bridal hour!"
But it drooped its head, that plant of power,
And died the mute death of a voiceless flower;
And a withered leaf on the ground it lay,
More meet for a burial than a bridal day.
And when a year was passed away,
All pale on her bier the young maid lay!
And the glow-worm came
With its silvery flame,
And sparkled and shone
Through the night of St. John;
And they closed the cold grave o'er the maid's cold clay.

Vernaleken says the Slavocks believe that any person approaching too near to the fern, at the time of its "efflorescence," will be overcome by drowsiness, and that beings of a supernatural character will successfully resist any attempt to lay hands on the plant. Bivot has a statement to a somewhat similar effect.

A remarkable story respecting the magical quality of fern seed is related by Jacob Grimm, in his "Deutsche Mythologie." It is said to be a popular one with the people of Westphalia. A man, in search of a foal, passed through a meadow on Midsummer's Eve, when some ripening fern seed fell into his shoes. He did not return home until the following morning, when he was astonished to find that his wife and children appeared utterly unconscious of his presence. When he called out to them, "I have not found the foal," the greatest alarm and confusion followed, for the members of his household could hear his voice but failed to detect his person. Fancying he was hiding in jest, his wife called out his name. He answered, "here I am right before you. Why do you call me?" This but

increased their terror. The man perceiving that he was, to them invisible, thought it not improbable that something in his shoes, which felt like sand, might really prove to be fern seed. He accordingly pulled them off, and as he scattered the grains on the floor, resumed his visibility to the eyes of his astounded family.

In an ancient "Calendar of the Romish Church," the 23rd June, the vigil of the nativity of John the Baptist, is stated to be prolific in supernatural phenomena. Amongst others we are informed that "waters are swum in during the night, and are brought in vessels that hang for the purposes of divination;" that "fern is in great estimation with the vulgar, on account of its seed." We are further informed that "herbs of different kinds are sought with many ceremonies." Monsieur Bergerac, in his "Satyrical Characters," translated "out of the French, by a Person of Honour," in 1658, makes a magician of the period enumerate amongst his many powers and duties the "wakening of the country fellow on St. John's eve to gather his hearb, fasting and in silence." Brand says that "a respectable countryman, at Heston, in Middlesex," had stated to him that he had often been "present at the ceremony of catching the fern seed at midnight on the eve of St. John the Baptist. The attempt, he said, was often unsuccessful, for the seed was to fall into the plate of its own accord, and that, too, without shaking the plant."

Referring to our Lancashire superstitions Mr. T. T. Wilkinson says:—"Fern seed is still said to be gathered on the Holy Bible, and is believed to be able to render those invisible who will dare to take it; and herbs for the use of man and beasts are still collected when their proper planets are ruling in the heavens."

Ceremonies on St. John's Eve are likewise regarded as very potent in matters matrimonial. Bivot describes a party of fair ladies who say,—"We have been told divers times that if we fasted on Midsummer Eve, and then at twelve o'clock at night laid a cloth on the table, with bread and cheese, and a cup of the best beer, setting ourselves down as if we were going to eat, and leaving the door of the room open, we should see the persons whom we should afterwards marry, come into the room and drink to us."

The belief in the power of fern seed in the domain over which Cupid is said to preside, still lingers in various parts of Lancashire. The best story of this class that I have met with, is related by Samuel Bamford, in his "Passages in the Life of a Radical." One Bangle, a Lancashire youth, "of ardent temperament but bashful withal," had become enamoured of the daughter of a neighbouring farmer.

"His modest approaches had not been noticed by the adored one; and, as she had danced with another youth at Bury fair, he imagined she was irrecoverably lost to him, and the persuasion had driven him melancholy. Doctors had been applied to, but he was no better; philters and charms had been tried to bring down the cold hearted maid, but all in vain. . . . At length sorcerers and fortune-tellers were thought of, and 'Limping Billy,' a noted seer, residing at Radcliffe Bridge, having been consulted, said the lad had no chance of gaining power over the damsel, unless he could take St. John's fern seed; and if he could but secure three grains of that, he might bring to him whatever he wished, that walked, flew, or swam."

Two friends, Plant, a country botanist, and Chirrup, a bird catcher, agreed to accompany Bangle in his expedition in search of the potent fern seed. Plant said he knew where the finest specimens of the herb grew, and led the way to the "Boggart Ho' Clough," referred to in the preceding chapter. The three worthies assembled on the Eve of St. John, at midnight, in this then thickly wooded glen. As a part of the necessary cabalistic implements, Plant brought an earthen dish, "brown and roof" [rough], Chirrup a pewter platter, which he regarded as "breet enough" for their purpose; Bangle's contribution, which he described as "teed wi' web an' woof," and "deep enough," was "a musty dun skull, with the cap sawn off above the eyes, and left flapping like a lid by a piece of tanned scalp, which still adhered. The interior cavities had also been stuffed with moss and lined with clay, kneaded with blood from human veins, and the youth had secured the skull to his shoulders by a twine of three strands made of unbleached flax, of undyed wool, and of woman's hair, from which also depended a raven black tress, which a wily crone had procured from the maid he sought to obtain. . . . A silence, like that of death, was around them, as they entered the open platting. Nothing moved either in tree or brake. Through a space in the foliage the stars were seen pale in heaven, and a crooked moon hung in a bit of blue, amid motionless clouds. All was still and breathless, as if earth, heaven, and the elements were aghast. . . . Gasping, and with cold sweat oozing on his brow, Plant recollected that they were to shake the fern with a forked rod of witch hazel, and by no means must touch it with their hands. . . . Plant drew his knife, and stepping into a moonlighted bush, soon returned with what was wanted, and then went forward. The green knowe [knoll], the old oaks, the encircled space, and the fern were now approached; the latter stiff and erect in a gleamy light. . . . Plant knelt on one

knee, and held his dish under the fern. Chirrup held his broad plate next below, and Bangle knelt and rested the skull directly under both on the green sod, the lid being up. Plant said :—

> Good St. John, this seed we crave,
> We have dared; shall we have?

"A voice responded—

> Now the moon is downward starting,
> Moon and stars are now departing;
> Quick, quick; shake, shake;
> He whose heart shall soonest break,
> Let him take.

"They looked, and perceived by a glame that a venerable form, in a loose robe, was near them.

"Darkness came down like a swoop. The fern was shaken; the upper dish flew into pieces; the pewter one melted; the skull emitted a cry, and eyes glared in its sockets; lights broke; beautiful children were seen walking in their holiday clothes, and graceful female forms sung mournful and enchanting airs. The men stood terrified and fascinated; and Bangle, gazing, bade 'God bless 'em.' A crash followed as if all the timber in the kloof was being splintered and torn up; strange and horrid forms appeared from the thickets; the men ran as if sped on the wind. They separated and lost each other."

Plant lay unconscious at home for three days, and "Chirrup was found on the White Moss, raving mad and chasing the wild birds; as for poor Bangle, he found his way home over hedge and ditch, running with supernatural and fearful speed—the skull's eyes glaring at his back, and the nether jaw grinning and jabbering frightful and unintelligible sounds. He had preserved the seed, however, and, having taken it from the skull, he buried the latter at the cross road from whence he had taken it. He then carried the spell out, and his proud love stood one night by his bedside in tears. But he had done too much for human nature—in three months after she followed his corpse, a real mourner, to the grave."

Kelly gives several illustrations of the varied forms in which the superstitions respecting this "lightning plant" are presented in other countries, which throw additional light upon some of the incidents in Bamford's story. He says :—"Besides the powers already mentioned, fern has others which distinctly mark its affinity with thunder and lightning. 'In places where it grows the devil rarely practises his glamour. He shuns and abhors the house and the place where it is,

and thunder, lightning and hail rarely fall there.'* This is in apparent contradiction with the Polish superstition, according to which the plucking of fern produces a violent thunderstorm; but it is a natural superstition, that the hitherto rooted and transformed thunderbolt resumes its pristine nature, when the plant that contained it is taken from the ground. In the Thuringian forest fern is called *irrkracet*, or bewildering weed (from *irren*, to err, go astray), because whoever treads on it unawares loses his wits, and knows not where he is. In fact, he is in that condition of mind which we English call 'thunderstruck,' and which Germans, Romans, and Greeks have agreed in denoting by exactly corresponding terms. He has been crazed by a shock from the lightning with which the fern is charged like a Leyden jar. Instances of a similar phenomenon occur in the legends of India and Greece."

The forms of beauty, referred to by Bamford as appearing amongst the uncouth and "jabbering" sprites on this momentous occasion, are suggestive of the legend of the "bright-day god" Baldr. Longfellow says,—"Now the glad, leafy Midsummer, full of blossoms and songs of nightingales is come! Saint John has taken the flowers and festival of heathen Balder." It appears that Freyja, in exacting an oath from all created things never to harm this "whitest and most beloved of the gods," inadvertently overlooked one of the lightning plants. It was an arrow formed from the branch of the mistletoe, flung by the hand of the blind Hodr or Helder, with which Baldr was struck dead. Baldr, says the legend, was buried in the true Scandinavian fashion. His body was placed by the Æsir on a funeral pyre, raised on the deck of a ship, and whilst the former was in flames the latter was floated seaward. The "St. John's-wort" seems to have superseded the mistletoe in the modern tradition. As both were "lightning plants," this however is not specially remarkable.

Ferns belong to the class *Cryptogamia*, or non-flowering plants. They produce no seed, in a true sense, but fructify by means of the sporules, or spores, deposited in *thecæ*, on the under side of the fronds. It was formerly believed that they did produce seed, and old botanists describe it as "too minute and obscure" to be readily detected. Singularly enough, the St. John's-wort *(Hypericum)*, of which there are several species found in Lancashire, is generally confounded in these traditions with the *Osmunda Regalis*, or royal fern, or, as it is sometimes improperly styled, the "*flowering* fern," which, of course,

* Jacob Grimm.

is an absurdity, as expressing neither more nor less than the flowering non-flowering plant! The name is said to be of Saxon origin, Osmunda being one of the appellations of Thor, who, as we have previously seen, was the "consecrator of marriage." The sporules are very numerous and minute. The common St. John's-wort *(Hypericum Vulgare.* Lin.*)* bears a yellow flower, and produces, of course, regular seeds. Hill, in his "British Herbal," published in 1756, says, "A tincture of the flower made strong in white wine is recommended greatly by some against melancholy; but of these qualities we speak with less certainty, though they deserve a fair trial."

Mr. John Ingram, in his "Flora Symbolica," says,—"Vervain, or wild verbena, has been the floral symbol of enchantment from time immemorial," Ben Jonson says :—

> Bring your garlands, and with reverence place
> The vervain on the altar.

Mr. Ingram adds,—"In some country districts this small insignificant flower still retains a portion of its old renown, and old folks tie it round the neck to charm away the ague; with many it still has the reputation of securing affection from those who take it to those who administer it; and still in some parts of France do the peasantry continue to gather the vervain, with ceremonies and words known only to themselves; and to express its juices under certain phases of the moon. At once the doctors and conjurors of their village, they alternately cure the complaints of their masters or fill them with dread; for the same means which relieve their ailments enable them to cast a spell on their cattle and on the hearts of their daughters. They insist that this power is given to them by vervain, especially when the damsels are young and handsome. The vervain is still the plant of spells and enchantments, as it was amongst the ancients."

A superstitious feeling yet prevails that the burning of fern attracts rain. A copy of a royal proclamation is preserved in the British Museum, enjoining the country people not to burn the fern on the waysides during a "royal progress" of the merry monarch, Charles II.

The confusion which exists in the minds of the vulgar respecting two very distinct classes of these plants, all, however, of lightning origin in the Aryan mythology, is thus commented upon by Kelly :—"It is also a highly significant fact that the marvellous root (St. John's-wort) is said to be connected with fern; for the johnsroot or john's hand is the root of a species of fern *(Polypodium Filix mas.* Lin.), which is applied to many superstitious uses. The fern has large pinnate fronds, and is thus related to the mountain ash and the mimosæ.

In fact, says Kuhn, it were hardly possible to find in our climate a plant which more accurately corresponds in its whole appearance to the original signification of the Sanscrit name parna as leaf and feather. Nor does the relationship between them end here, for fern, Anglo-Saxon *fearn*, Old German *faram*, *farn*, and Sancrit *parna*, are one and the same word. It is also worthy of note that whereas one of the German names of the rowan means boarash (eberesche), so also there is a fern *(Polypodium Filix arboratica)* which is called in Anglo-Saxon *eoferfarn*, *eferfarn*, that is boar-fern. In all the Indo-European mythologies the boar is an animal connected with storm and lightning."

Mr. Edwin Waugh, in his "Sketches of Lancashire Life and Localities," mentions a curious fact relative to this famous "Boggart Ho' Clough," which is not without its significance. He says he was informed that a lawyer, anxious to describe the locality in a legal document, had found, on referring to some old title deeds, that a "'family of the name of 'Bowker' had formerly occupied a residence situate in or near the clough; and that their dwelling was designated 'Bowker's Hall.'" The lawyer very naturally adopted this as the true origin of the name. Yet Mr. Waugh informs us that the "testimony of every writer who notices the spot, especially those best acquainted with it, inclines to the other derivation."

Feeling some curiosity as to the true origin of this bit of local nomenclature, I some time ago visited the place, in company with Mr. Waugh. While we were resting at the farmhouse at the head of the clough, I asked a buxom maid if she had ever seen a boggart in the neighbourhood. She candidly confessed that she had not. On my pressing her hard as to whether she knew any one who had been more fortunate, or unfortunate, as the case might be, she said firmly, after a slight scrutiny of my countenance and figure—"Yes; Sam Bamford has!" I put similar questions about an hour afterwards to the maid at the "Bell" public-house, in Moston Lane, which, to my surprise, elicited exactly similar responses. I pressed this girl still further on the subject; and at length she frankly said,—"I don't think any body, as I know, has sin a boggart i'th clough except Bamford, 'bout it be Edwin Waugh. Ye've heard of him, no doubt!" The girl was astounded on my informing her that Mr. Waugh was present; and still more so when she witnessed the amusement which his supposed interview with the redoubtable boggart created amongst the party.

That there have existed traditions of boggarts, ghosts, &c., in the

neighbourhood, as in other places, from time immemorial, cannot admit of a doubt; but I nevertheless suspect that the corruption referred to by Mr. Waugh has fixed the precise locality of, at least, one of the stories to which I have referred. Once call a place "Boggart Ho' Clough," and especially such a place, and I can easily imagine, in a very short time, that many of the floating traditions of the neighbourhood would fasten themselves upon it. This being afterwards rendered more definite by the action of literary exponents of traditionary lore, is quite sufficient to explain the whole of the phenomena pertaining to the question in dispute. It must not be forgotten, either, that by the vernacular appellation the clough is not necessarily supposed to be haunted, but the "*hall*" merely, which stood in it, or somewhere in its neighbourhood.

On the line of the Roman Wall, to the north of Haltwhistle, Dr. Collingwood Bruce speaks of "a gap of bold proportions having the ominous name of Boglehole." Doubtless many other localities could be pointed out where a nomenclature of a similar kind obtains, and is still believed in by many not necessarily otherwise uneducated people.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SPECTRE HUNTSMAN AND THE FURIOUS HOST.

> He the seven birds hath seen that never part,
> Seen the seven whistlers on their mighty rounds,
> And counted them! And oftentimes will start,
> *For overhead are sweeping Gabriel's hounds,*
> Doomed with their *impious lord* the flying hart,
> To chase for ever on aërial grounds.
>
> WORDSWORTH.

"AMONGST the most prominent of the demon superstitions prevalent in Lancashire," says Mr. T. T. Wilkinson, "we may first instance that of the Spectre Huntsman, which occupies so conspicuous a place in the folk-lore of Germany and the north. This superstition is still extant in the gorge of Cliviger, where he is believed to hunt a milk white doe round the Eagle's Crag, in the vale of Todmorden, on All Hallows Eve. His *hounds* are said to fly yelping through the air on many other occasions, and, under the local name of '*Gabriel Ratchets*,' are supposed to predict death or misfortune to all who hear the sounds."

This superstition is known about Leeds, and other places in Yorkshire, as "*Gabble Retchet*," and refers more especially to the belief that the souls of unbaptised children are doomed to wander in this stormy fashion about the homes of their parents.

These peculiar superstitions appear to have nearly died out, or to have become merged into some other legends based on the action of the Aryan storm gods, Indra, Rudra, and their attendant Maruts or Winds, both in Great Britain and Ireland. According to a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, of July, 1836, the wild huntsman still lingers in Devonshire. He says, "the spectre pack which hunts over Dartmoor is called the 'wish hounds,' and the black 'master' who follows the chase is no doubt the same who has left his mark on Wistman's Wood," a neighbouring forest of dwarf oaks.

The late Mr. Holland, of Sheffield, referring to this superstition, in 1861, says, "I can never forget the impression made upon my own

mind when once arrested by the cry of these Gabriel hounds as I passed the parish church of Sheffield, one densely dark and very still night. The sound was exactly like the greeting of a dozen beagles on the foot of a race, but not so loud, and highly suggestive of ideas of the supernatural." Mr. Holland has embodied the local feeling on this subject in the following sonnet :—

Oft have I heard my honoured mother say,
How she has listened to the Gabriel hounds—
Those strange unearthly and mysterious sounds,
Which on the ear through murkiest darkness fell;
And how, entranced by superstitious spell,
The trembling villager not seldom heard,
In the quaint noise of the nocturnal bird
Of death premonished, some sick neighbour's knell.
I, too, remember once at midnight dark,
How these sky-yelpers startled me and stirred
My fancy so, I could have then averred
A mimic pack of beagles low did bark.
Nor wondered I that rustic fear should trace
A spectral huntsman doomed to that long moonless chase.

In classic mythology this wild hunt myth is paralleled by the career of Orion, the "mighty hunter, the cloud raging in wild freedom over hills and dales." Seeking to make the beautiful Aerô his bride, he is blinded by her father, who caught him asleep. After recovering his sight by a journey towards the rising sun, he vainly endeavours to seize upon and punish his enemy. In his wanderings he meets with and is beloved by Artemis (Diana), one of the dawn godesses. The Rev. G. W. Cox says, "It is but the story of the beautiful cloud left in darkness when the sun goes down, but recovering its brilliance when he rises again in the east." After his death, being so nearly akin to the powers of light, Asklêpios "seeks to raise him from the dead, and thus brings on his own doom from the thunderbolts of Zeus—a myth which points to the blotting out of the sun from the sky by the thundercloud, just as he was rekindling the faded vapours which lie motionless on the horizon." Orion's hound afterwards became the dog-star, Sirius. Hence our name dog days for parching weather.

This chasing of the white doe or the white hart by the spectre huntsman has assumed various forms. According to Aristotle a white hart was killed by Agathocles, king of Sicily, which a thousand years beforehand had been consecrated to Diana by Diomedes. Alexander the Great is said by Pliny to have caught a white stag, placed a collar of gold about its neck, and afterwards set it free.

Succeeding heroes have, in after days, been announced as the capturers of this famous white hart. Julius Cæsar took the place of Alexander, and Charlemagne caught a white hart at both Magdebourg, and in the Holstein woods. In 1172, William the Lion is reported to have accomplished a similar feat, according to a Latin inscription on the walls of Lubeck Cathedral. Tradition says the white hart has been caught on Rothwell Hay Common, in Yorkshire, and in Windsor Forest.

Dean Stanley, in his "Historic Memorials of Westminster Abbey," informs us that the great northern entrance of that truly historic pile was erected in the reign of Richard II., and that once "it contained his well-known badge of the White Hart, which still remains, in colossal proportions, on the fragile partition which shuts off the Muniment Room from the southern triforium of the Nave." It appears that the badge was first adopted in honour of his mother, Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent, at a tournament in 1396. It had, however, direct reference to the tradition which asserted that the famous white hart of Cæsar had been caught at Besastine, near Bagshot, in Windsor Forest. Its identity was said to have been proved by a collar of gold about its neck, which bore the following inscription :—"*Nemo me tangat: Cæsaris sum.*" The badge was so popular amongst the friends of Richard, that Bolingbroke, when Henry IV., had much difficulty in suppressing it. Its frequent adoption as an inn sign is likewise attributed to this circumstance.

In early Greek art, the deities of the morning, Athena, Apollo and Artemis, are commonly, if not invariably, associated with a fawn with a gleam of light on its breast. The hart in these legends appears to typify the dawn, and, in conjunction with some other elements of the myth, implies the daily sequence of light and darkness.

The spectre huntsman, so very popular in Scandinavian and German tradition, is the Teutonic deity Odin or Woden, from whence our Wednesday. Woden is claimed by the early Angle and Saxon kings of the heptarchy as their common ancestor. This god had many names, each descriptive of some special quality or attribute. Amongst others he was styled Wunsch, from which we have the Anglo-Saxon wisk, and the modern English wish, in the sense in which it is used in the divining or wish rod (German wünschelruthe). In Devonshire the term "wishtness" is still retained, and is employed to designate "all unearthly creatures and their doings." Indra and Rudra are regarded as the Aryan prototypes of Odin. Some of their chief characteristics are retained in the doings of the "wild huntsman" and his followers

that form the *dramatis personæ* of the "furious host." Kelly describes the first phase of this legend as follows:

"Mounted on his white or dappled grey steed, the wild huntsman may always be recognised by his broad-brimmed hat, and his wide mantle, from which he is surnamed Hakelbärend or Hakelberg, an old word signifying mantle-wearer. The hooting owl, Tutursel, flies before him, and ravens, birds peculiarly sacred to Woden, accompany the chase. Whoever sees it approach must fall flat on the ground, or shelter himself under any odd number of boards, nine or eleven, otherwise he will be borne away through the air and set down hundreds of miles away from home, among people who speak a strange tongue. It is still more dangerous to look out of the window when Odin is sweeping by. The rash man is struck dead, or at least gets a box on the ear that makes his head swell as big as a bucket, and leaves a fiery mark on his cheek. In some instances the offender has been struck blind or mad. There are certain places where Woden is accustomed to feed his horse or let it graze, and in those places the wind is always blowing. He has also a preference for certain tracks, over which he hunts again and again at fixed seasons, from which circumstance districts and villages in the old Saxon land received the name of Woden's way. Houses and barns in which there are two or three doors opposite each other are very liable to be made thoroughfares by the wild hunt."

Mr. Baring-Gould, in his "Iceland, its Scenes and Sages," describes this superstition, as he heard it from his guide Jón, who related it to him under the title of the "yule host." He says,—"Odin, or Wodin, is the wild huntsman who nightly tears on his white horse over the German and Norwegian forests and moor-sweeps, with his legion of hell-hounds. Some luckless woodcutter, on a still night, is returning through the pine woods; the air is sweet-scented with matchless pine fragrance. Overhead the sky is covered with grey vapour, but a mist is on all the land; not a sound among the fir tops; and the man starts at the click of a falling cone. Suddenly his ear catches a distant wail; a moan rolls through the interlacing branches; nearer and nearer comes the sound. There is the winding of a long horn waxing louder and louder, the baying of hounds, the rattle of hoofs and paws on the pine tree tops. A blast of wind rolls along, the firs bend as withes, and the woodcutter sees the wild huntsman and his rout reeling by in frantic haste. . . . The wild huntsman chases the wood spirits, and he is to be seen at cockcrow returning with the little Dryads hanging to his saddle-bow by their yellow locks."

The personification of the strife of the elements in stormy weather is here very apparent. As the name of Odin or other of his special appellations became lost or corrupted, mysterious personages, or heroes of another and more mortal stamp, became confounded with the spectre huntsman. Herod, the murderer of the Jewish children, is evidently referred to by the French peasants of Perigord, when they speak of "La chasse Herode." This seems to have resulted from the corruption of Hrôdso (the renowned), one of the titles applied to Odin.

At Blois, the wild hunt is called the "chasse Maccabei," from the following supposed reference to it in the Bible :—"Then it happened that through all the city, for the space almost of forty days, there were seen horsemen running in the air, in cloth of gold, and armed with lances like a band of soldiers. And troops of horsemen in array, encountering and running one against another, with shaking of shields and multitudes of pikes, and drawing of swords, and casting of darts, and glittering of golden ornaments and harness of all sorts. Wherefore every man prayed that that apparition might turn to good." (II. Maccabeus, v. 2 to 4.)

In Brittany and Picardy the peasants, in the midst of sudden storms or whirlwinds, which throw down trees and steeples, are still in the habit of crossing themselves, and exclaiming "*C'est le juif errant qui passe.*" This evidently demonstrates that the legendary story of the wandering Jew, the spectre hunt of Odin, and the superstitions associated with the seven whistlers, have been confounded or "dovetailed," as it were, one into the other. Indeed, in its combined form, remnants may yet be found in Lancashire. Mr. James Pearson, in a contribution to "Notes and Queries," of September 30th, 1871, testifies to this in the following terms :—

"The Seven Whistlers.—One evening a few years ago, when crossing one of our Lancashire moors, in company with an intelligent old man, we were suddenly startled by the whistling overhead of a covey of plovers. My companion remarked that when a boy the old people considered such a circumstance a bad omen, 'as the person who heard *the wandering Jews*,' as he called the plovers, 'was sure to be overtaken with some ill luck.' On questioning my friend on the name given to the birds, he said, 'There is a tradition that they contain the souls of those Jews who assisted at the crucifixion, and in consequence were doomed to float in the air for ever.' When we arrived at the foot of the moor, a coach, by which I had hoped to complete my journey, had already left its station, thereby causing me to finish the distance on foot. The old man reminded me of the omen."

Another writer, "A. S.," in "Notes and Queries," October 21, 1871, says:—"During a thunderstorm which passed over this district" (Kettering, in Yorkshire), "on the evening of September 6, on which occasion the lightning was very vivid, an unusual spectacle was witnessed; immense flocks of birds were flying about, uttering doleful affrighted cries, as they passed over the locality, and for hours they kept up a continual whistling like that made by sea birds. There must have been great numbers of them, as they were also observed at the same time, as we learn by the public prints, in the counties of Northampton, Leicester, and Lincoln. The next day, as my servant was driving me to a neighbouring village, this phenomenon of the flight of birds became the subject of conversation, and on asking him what birds he thought they were he told me they were what were called *The Seven Whistlers*, and that whenever they were heard it was considered a sign of some great calamity, and that the last time he heard them was the night before the great Hartley colliery explosion; he had also been told by soldiers that if they heard them they always expected a great slaughter would take place soon. Curiously enough, on taking up the newspaper the following morning, I saw headed in large letters—'Terrible Colliery Explosion at Wigan,' etc., etc. This I thought would confirm my man's belief in 'the Seven Whistlers.'"

I have heard it seriously asserted in discussion by geologists and mining engineers, that a low state of the barometer generally, if not invariably, accompanies a certain class of accidents in coal pits. Perhaps this peculiar atmospheric condition may explain the coincidences referred to.

Another contributor of the same date, "Viator," gives the following Eastern illustration of this superstition,—"It strikes me as curious that Mr. Pearson should hear on a Lancashire moor a tradition or superstition so similar to that which I have heard on the Bosphorus with reference to certain flocks of birds, about the size of a thrush, which fly up and down the channel, and are never seen to rest on the land or water. I was informed by the man who rowed the *caique* that they were the souls of the damned, and condemned to perpetual motion."

There is a legend of Odin wandering over the earth, accompanied by his two ravens, one of which represented Thought and the other Memory. Mr. Princeps had a picture in the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1871, illustrating this tradition.

The last time the wandering Jew is said to have appeared *in propriâ*

personâ was in the year 1604, when he was believed to have been seen three times in France. As his appearance was invariably accompanied with violent and destructive tempests, the peasantry concluded that his mode of locomotion was of a supernatural character, and that the fierce blasts of the storm god (or fiend) hurled him from place to place. Since the French visits referred to, it seems that the wandering Jew's advent has not been able to gain much credence. Several times, however, attempts in this direction have been made. Referring to the subject, Brand says :—"I remember to have seen one of these imposters some years ago in the north of England, who made a very hermit-like appearance, and went up and down the streets of Newcastle with a long train of boys at his heels, muttering, 'Poor John alone, alone!' I thought he pronounced his name in a manner singularly plaintive." In a note Brand adds that "Poor John alone" is "otherwise 'Poor Jew alone.'" He mentions a portrait of this man, painted for Sir William Musgrave, Bart., which was inscribed "Poor Joe alone!" which corresponds with the name of a then recent pretender of this class, as recorded by Mathew Paris, on the authority of an Armenian archbishop, who, in 1228, visited the monastery at St. Albans.

The earlier gods of the heathens were supposed, notwithstanding their immortality, to be occasionally subjected to a kind of temporary death. Baldr, the bright day god, was slain by a stroke of a mistletoe branch, wielded by the hand of the blind Hodr ; the Python overcame Apollo ; and such is sometimes the strange inconsistency of early traditions and their after development, that the grave of Zeus was a sacred spot to the Ancient Greeks. The spectre huntsman appears to have been subjected to some such death, or protracted trance, periodically.

Odin rode on his dappled grey steed only in rough weather. His mortal enemy seems to have been the wild boar. This animal is also a favourite mythic form of expression in Merlin's famous prophesy. The Germans have a legend that in the form of Hackelberg, or the mantle wearer, on one occasion he was heard to inquire for the "stumpy tail" that he knew from a vision was destined to overcome him. At a great hunt he killed the animal, and fancied that he had practically given the lie to his dream of the previous night. In his triumph he kicked the slain brute contemptuously ; but the tusk of the dead animal (an Aryan personification of the lightning) piercing his leg, inflicted a wound, from the effects of which he died, or, in other words, fell into a deep trance. This evidently represents the season of calm weather, during which the spectre huntsman and his howling pack rest from their labours.

This wild boar legend has near mythological affinity to the Greek one, respecting Adonis, who, whilst hunting, was mortally wounded in the thigh by a wild boar. The waters of the river Adonis assume, at a certain season of the year, a deep red hue, which was said to be caused by the blood of Adonis. Modern investigation has attributed this phenomenon to periodical heavy rains, which bring large quantities of red earth into the river. In Syria, Thammuz, an older prototype or counterpart of Adonis, was worshipped, which worship was denounced by Ezekiel, six centuries before Christ, as amongst the abominations of Judah. Milton, in "Paradise Lost," says :—

> Thammuz came next behind,
> Whose annual wound in Lebanon allur'd
> The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
> In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
> While smooth Adonis from his native rock
> Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
> Of Thammuz yearly wounded.

Adonis alternately abode with Aphrodite in heaven and Persephonê in hell. This has been held to be "typical of the burial of seed, which, in due season, rises above the ground for the propagation of its species," or of the "annual passage of the sun from the northern to the southern hemisphere."

Odin was surnamed the lord of the gallows, or the god of the hanged, because human sacrifices were offered to him in this fashion, and because he had hanged himself for nine days on the mighty tree Yggdrasil. Hence the superstition in Germany, and not unknown in England, that the act of committing suicide by hanging creates a storm.

The temporary death, or state of coma, of these weather gods is very significant. When Indra or Odin hurled his spear, the weapon, with most commendable loyalty, as a rule, returned to the hand of its proprietor. Thor's hammer or lightning club, was, generally, equally accommodating. But at the conclusion of the autumnal storms, the implement remained buried in the earth, where, like some animals, it may be said to have hybernated. It was not until the return of spring that the potent weapon was restored to the grasp of the thundering deity.

The analogy of the weapons of these gods to the lightning is forcibly illustrated by the Scandinavian legend, which asserts that Odin lent his spear in the form of a reed to King Erich in order to ensure him the victory in a battle against Styrbjörn. The reed, in

its flight, assumed the form of a spear, and *struck with blindness* the whole of the opposing army.

The peculiar form of this weapon of the gods has undergone many changes in mythical lore. It is the sword of Roland, "Durandal," which Mr. Cox says "is manifestly the sword of Chrysâôr." It is that of Theseus and that of Sigurd. It is Arthur's famous sword "Excalibur," as well as the one which no one could draw from the iron anvil sheath, embedded in stone, but himself. It is Odin's sword, "Gram," stuck in the roof tree of Volsung's hall. Mr. Cox says:—"Like all other sons of Helios, Arthur has his enemies, and King Rience demands as a sign of homage the beard of Arthur, which gleams with the splendour of the golden locks or rays of Phoibos Akersekomes. The demand is refused, but in the mediæval romance there is room for others who reflect the glory of Arthur, while his own splendour is for a time obscured. At Camelot they see a maiden with a sword attached to her body, which Arthur himself cannot draw. In the Knight Balin, who draws it, and who 'because he was poorly arrayed put him not far in the press,' we see not merely the humble Arthur, who gives his sword to Sir Kay, but Odysseus, who in his beggar's dress shrinks from the brilliant throng that crowds his ancestral hall." Cambell, in his "Tales of the West Highlands," says:—"The Manx hero, Olave, of Norway, had a sword with a Celtic name, Macabuin." It reappears in many of the fairy tales. In some popular stories it becomes an ordinary cudgel, with magical properties, leaps of its own accord out of the lad's bag who owned it, and severely punishes the rascally innkeeper who stole the buck-goat that spat gold, the hen that layed the golden eggs, and a table that covered itself with a sumptuous repast, without human aid. The stick, like Indra's spear, returned to its owner's hand on the completion of the innkeeper's castigation. Different versions of the legend are found in Yorkshire, Germany, and various other parts of Europe. Kelly says:—"The table, in this story, is the all-nourishing cloud. The buck-goat is another emblem of the clouds, and the gold it spits is the golden light of the sun that streams through the fleecy covering of the sky. The hen's golden egg is the sun itself. The demon of darkness has stolen these things; the cloud gives no rain, but hangs dusky in the sky, veiling the light of the sun. Then the lightning spear of the ancient storm-god, Odin, leaps out from the bag that concealed it (the cloud again), the robber falls, the rain patters down, the sun shines once more." In other words we have the Sanscrit Vritra, the dragon, or "dark thief," stealing the herds

of Indra, and hiding them in the cave of the Panis (the dark cloud), and the weapon of the lightning god effecting their liberation.

It is said that, in the "elevated and inland region of Arya, the winter was a rigorous season of seven months' duration, and it has been suggested that the dormant condition of the lightning, or the sun god's weapon, is symbolical of the fact. Lyell and others contend that geological evidence indicates that the winters were long and severe during the period when the makers of the "palæoliths," or rude flint implements, which have recently attracted so much attention, lived on the banks of the Somme, near Amiens and Abbeville, and in other localities in England and Northern Europe. These implements are believed to furnish the most reliable evidence of the earliest existence of man yet discovered. If such was the condition of the country on the arrival of the Aryan emigrants, four different classes of facts—mythological, philological, geological, and archæological—seem to be in perfect harmony with each other.

Kelly says, "in some places local tradition makes Hackelberg a mere man; in others an enormous giant. At Rocklum, near Wolfenbuttel, the existence of a group of hills is accounted for by saying that they are composed of the gravel which Hackelberg once threw out of his shoe as he passed that way with the wild hunt." Similar traditions are not unknown in Lancashire and other parts of Britain. It is stated in Knight's "Old England" that "there were formerly three huge upright stones near Kennet, not far from Abury, the country people called them from time immemorial, 'The Devil's Coits.' They could be playthings, it might readily be imagined, for no other busy idler. But the good folks of Somersetshire, by a sort of refinement of such hacknied traditions, hold that a great stone, near Stanton Drew, now called '*Hackell's Coit*,' and which formerly weighed thirty tons, was thrown from a hill about a mile off, by a mortal champion, Sir Jno. Hautville."

Dr. J. Collingwood Bruce, in his "Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall," relates the following Northumberland tradition:—"To the north of Sewingsheilds, two strata of sandstone crop out to the day; the highest points of each ledge are called the King and Queen's-crag, from the following legend. King Arthur, seated on the furthest rock, was talking with his queen, who, meanwhile, was engaged in arranging her 'back-hair.' Some expression of the queen's having offended his majesty, he seized a rock which lay near him, and, with an exertion of strength for which the Picts were proverbial, he threw it at her, a distance of about a quarter of a mile! The queen, with great dex-

terity, caught it upon her comb, and thus warded off the blow; the stone fell between them, where it lies to this very day, with the marks of the comb upon it, to attest the truth of the story. It probably weighs about twenty tons." *

This method of accounting for the deposition of the large boulders and other erratic rocks of the glacial drift period of modern geology is common in Lancashire and the North of England. Odin, or Hackelberg, is, of course, in these legends, converted into the devil, as in Kennet. He is supposed to have built a bridge over the Kent, a little above Kendal, and another over the Lune, at Kirkby Lonsdale; and it is said that in leaping from the hills on the Yorkshire side of the valley into Lancashire, his apron string broke, and a large mass of scattered rocks which lie in the valley fell to the earth in consequence. The present writer was once shown, near Hutton Roof, a hollow in the mountain limestone of which the hill is formed, which he was seriously told had been named, from time immemorial, the "Devil's Footprint," and was still held to be irrefragible evidence of the truth of the legend referred to. The hole in the rock did certainly bear some slight resemblance to the impression of a cow's hoof on some plastic substance; but it in reality is an ordinary limestone cavity, of a somewhat unusual form.

The removing of stones in the night by the devil on the occasion of the building of churches appears to have some remote connection with the ancient superstition now under consideration. Lancashire has many such stories. The wild boar, or demon pig, played some such pranks at Winwick. A rude sculpture, "resembling a hog fastened to a block by the collar," has been found amongst the carved stones which decorated the ancient church. In this, Mr. E. Baines says, "superstition sees the resemblance of a monster in former ages, which prowled over the neighbourhood, inflicting injury on man and beast, and which could only be restrained by the subduing power of the sacred edifice." Mr. T. T. Wilkinson says "The Goblin Builders" are "said to have removed the foundations of Rochdale Church from the banks of the river Roach up to their present elevated position. Samlesbury Church near Preston, possesses a similar tradition. The demon pig not only determined the site of St. Oswald's Church at Winwick, but gave a name to the parish.† The parochial church at Burnley, it

* QUERY:—May not the "marks of the comb" be, in reality, striæ resulting from glacial action?

† Since this was written, I have been told in a public company, in Manchester, by an intelligent man, that the squeaking of a pig did give the name to Winwick. My sug-

is said, was originally intended to be built on the site of the old Saxon cross, in Godly-lane; but, however much the masons might have built during the day, both the stones and the scaffolding were invariably found where the church now stands, on their coming to work next morning. The local legend states that on this occasion also, the goblin took the form of *a pig*, and a rude sculpture of such an animal, on the south side of the steeple, lends its aid to perpetuate and confirm the story."

Miss Farington, in her paper on Leyland Church, read before the Lancashire and Cheshire Historic Society, refers to several carved stones which decorated the ancient structure, and amongst others to what was termed the "cat stone." She says—"To this relic appends the usual story of the stones being removed by night (in this case from Whittle to Leyland), and the devil, in the form of a *cat*, throttling a person who was bold enough to watch." This tradition I have often heard spoken of myself by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

The cat, as I have shown in a previous chapter, like the boar, was an Aryan personification of storm and tempest.

When the Hackelberg-Odin was killed by the boar's tusk, in accordance with his last request, he was interred at the spot to which his favourite steed unguided bore him. He is believed to have been buried in the "enchanted or cloud mountain," which the superstitious, however, still insist upon finding on the earth. He is supposed to lie in a secluded spot on some lone moorland side, the way to which no curious enquirer ever trod a second time. Hence the many traditions of heroes slumbering in caves, awaiting the signal for future battle, and their triumph over the enchantment that has held them for ages spell-bound. Frederic Barbarossa—he of the red beard like Odin—is yet believed by the German peasantry to rest in a cavern, surrounded by his knights, in the Kyffhäuser mountain, "leaning his head upon his arm, at a table through which his beard has grown, or around which, according to other accounts, it has grown twice. When it has thrice encircled the table he will awake up to battle. The cavern glitters with gold and jewels, and is as bright as the sunniest day. Thousands of horses stand at mangers filled with thorn bushes instead of hay, and make a prodigious noise as they stamp on the ground and rattle their chains. The old Kaiser

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gestion that the old name of the brook, the "Wynwede," with the common suffix "wick," a village, was sufficient to explain the etymology, was, of course, laughed at as a relatively very prosaic affair indeed.

sometimes wakes up for a moment and speaks to his visitors. He once asked a herdsman who had found his way into the Kyffhäuser, 'Are the ravens [Odin's birds] still flying about the mountain?' The man replied that they were. 'Then,' said Barbarossa, 'I must sleep a hundred years longer.'" From many details in this superstition, Mannhardt clearly identifies Frederic and his companions with Odin and his wild host.

Similar stories are told of the Emperor Henry the Fowler, who is said to be entranced in the Sudemerberg, near Goslar. Charlemagne and his enchanted army are believed to slumber in several different localities. In Britain, Armorica, Normandy, and other places, the caverned hero, who has superseded Odin, is the renowned Arthur, who is expected yet to re-appear, and restore the glory of the ancient British race. Grimm shows that the mediæval Germans believed that "Arthur, too, the vanished King, whose return is expected by the Britons, and who rides at the head of the nightly host, is said to dwell with his men at arms in a mountain; Felicia, Sybilla's daughter, and the goddess Juno, live with him, and the whole army are well provided with food, drink, horses, and clothes."

It appears that the earliest poetical writer in the English vernacular, at the commencement of the thirteenth century, Layamon, in his "Brut or Chronicle of Britain, a Poetical Semi-Saxon Paraphrase of the Brut of Wace," first engrafted this legend on the Arthurian romances. According to him, Arthur, when dying, addressed Constantine, his successor, as follows:—"I will fare to Avalun to the fairest of all maidens, to Argante, the Queen, an elf most fair, and she shall make my wounds all sound; make me all whole with healing draughts. And afterwards I will come again to my kingdom and dwell with the Britons with mickle joy." Layamon further adds:—"Even with the words there approached from the sea a little short boat floating with the waves, and two women therein wondrously formed; and they took Arthur anon, and bare him quickly, and laid him softly down, and forth they gan depart. Then was it accomplished that Merlin whilom said, that mickle care should come of Arthur's departure. The Britons believe yet that he is alive and dwelleth in Avalun with the fairest of all elves, and the Britons even yet expect when Arthur shall return." Amongst the Welsh bards, after the appearance of Geoffrey's History, fairy land was designated "Ynys yr Avallon," or the "Island of the Apple Trees."

Sir Walter Scott, in his "Demonology and Witchcraft," relates a

tradition, in which he makes Thomas the Rhymer the hero, but this Kelly contends is a blunder, and cites the following passage, quoted by Sir Walter himself, from Leyden's "Scenes of Infancy," in proof of his view that the caverned warriors referred to were King Arthur's Knights :—

> Say who is he with summons loud and long
> Shall bid the charmed sleep of ages fly,
> Roll the long sound through Eildon's caverns vast,
> While each dark warrior kindles at the blast ;
> The horn, the falchion grasp with mighty hand,
> And peal proud Arthur's march from Fairy land ?

Sir Walter Scott's version of the legend is as follows :—"A daring horse-jockey sold a black horse to a man of venerable and antique appearance, who appointed the remarkable hillock upon Eildon Hills, called the Lucken Hare, as the place where, at twelve o'clock at night he should receive the price. He came, his money was paid in ancient coin, and he was invited by his customer to view his residence. The trader in horses followed his guide in the deepest astonishment through several long ranges of stalls, in each of which a horse stood motionless, while an armed warrior lay equally still at the charger's feet. 'All these men,' said the wizard in a whisper, 'will awaken at the battle of Sheriffmoor.' At the extremity of this extraordinary depôt hung a sword and a horn, which the prophet pointed out to the horse dealer as containing the means of dissolving the spell. The man, in confusion, took the horn and attempted to wind it. The horses instantly started in their stalls, stamped, and shook their bridles, the men arose and clashed their armour, and the mortal, terrified at the tumult he had excited, dropped the horn from his hand. A voice like that of a giant, louder even than the tumult around, pronounced these words :—

> Woe to the coward that ever he was born,
> That did not draw the sword before he blew the horn !

A whirlwind expelled the horse dealer from the cavern, the entrance to which he could never find again."

In the neighbourhood of Kirkoswald, on the Eden, in Cumberland, a district prolific in Arthurian legends, it is said that "a peculiar wind called the *Helmwind*, sometimes blows with great fury in this part of the country. It is believed by some persons to be an electrical phenomenon." Perhaps this fact may have some remote connection with the superstition under consideration.

Sir Walter remarks that although his legend refers to Sheriffmoor,

and 1715, a similar story is related in the reign of Elizabeth by Reginald Scot. Indeed, it is told with some variations in several localities, both in the Highlands and in the northern counties of England. In Hodgson's "Northumberland" it is described in the following terms:—

"Immemorial tradition has asserted that King Arthur, his queen, Guenever, his court of lords and ladies, and his hounds, were enchanted in some cave of the crags, or in a hall below the castle of Sewingshields, and would continue entranced there till some one should first blow a bugle-horn, that lay on a table near the entrance of the hall, and then, with "the sword of the stone," cut a garter, also placed there beside it. But none had ever heard where the entrance to this enchanted hall was, till the farmer at Sewingshields, about fifty years since, was sitting knitting on the ruins of the castle, and his clew fell, and ran downwards through a rush of briers and nettles, as he supposed, into a deep subterranean passage. Full in the faith that the entrance into King Arthur's hall was now discovered, he cleared the briery portal of its weeds and rubbish, and, entering a vaulted passage, followed, in his darkling way, the thread of his clew. The floor was infested with toads and lizards; and the dark wings of bats, disturbed by his unhallowed intrusion, flitted fearfully around him. At length his sinking courage was strengthened by a dim, distant light, which, as he advanced, grew gradually brighter, till, all at once, he entered a vast and vaulted hall, in the centre of which, a fire without fuel, from a broad crevice in the floor, blazed with a high and lambent flame, that showed all the carved walls and fretted roof, and the monarch and his queen and court reposing around, in a theatre of thrones and costly couches. On the floor, beyond the fire, lay the faithful and *deep-toned pack of thirty couple of hounds;* and, on a table before it, the spell-dissolving horn, sword, and garter. The shepherd reverently, but firmly, grasped the sword, and as he drew it leisurely from its rusty scabbard, the eyes of the monarch and his courtiers began to open, and they rose till they sat upright. He cut the garter; and, as the sword was being slowly sheathed, the spell assumed its ancient power, and they all sank gradually to rest; but not before the monarch had lifted up his eyes and hands, and exclaimed:—

O woe betide that evil day
On which this witless wight was born,
Who drew the sword—the garter cut,
But never blew the bugle-horn.

Terror brought on loss of memory, and the shepherd was unable to give any correct account of his adventure, or to find again the entrance to the enchanted hall."

The Arthur legend is repeated, with some slight variations, by the country people about Alderley Edge, Cheshire. The sleeping warriors are said to repose in the recesses of a place called the "Wizard's Cave."

An old Cornish legend avers that King Arthur is still alive in the form of a raven; and certain superstitious people refuse to shoot these birds, from a fear that they might inadvertently destroy the mythic warrior.

King Arthur and his knights have been so popular in Lancashire, that the Rev. John Whitaker, the historian of Manchester, seriously relates the story of Sir Tarquin and Lancelot of the Lake as an historical event pertaining to this county. According to him, Tarquin's castle was at Manchester, and the lake from which Sir Lancelot derived his surname the now almost thoroughly drained Martin Mere. He contends that discovered remains demonstrate that three of the battles won by Arthur, and ascribed by tradition to the neighbourhood of the Douglas, were fought near Wigan and Blackrod. Geoffrey of Monmouth, however, only mentions one battle as being fought on the banks of the Douglas. He says:—

"The Saxons, under the command of Colgrin, were attempting to exterminate the whole of the British race. They had also entirely subdued all that part of the island which extends from the Humber to the sea of Caithness. . . . Hereupon he (Arthur) marched to (towards) York, of which, when Colgrin had intelligence, he met him with a very great army, composed of Saxons, Scots, and Picts, *by the river Duglas*, where a battle happened with the loss of the greater part of both armies. Notwithstanding, the victory fell to Arthur, who pursued Colgrin to York, and there besieged him."

The "historical" Arthur, however, has long been looked upon by the best historians as a mythical or fictitious personage, the representative, or impersonation as it were, of the national valour and superstition.* Dr. Kuhn and others regard all the stories of these caverned heroes as merely relatively modernised forms of Odin and his terrible host. They refer the weapon suspended in the cave to "that of Heimdallr, the Sverdâs or sword god, and warder of Bifrost Bridge," to whom belongs the "Gjallar horn with which

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*See the following chapter.

he will warn the gods that the frost giants are advancing to storm Valhalla." The mighty conflict in which they expect to be engaged "will be fought before the end of the world, when heaven and earth shall be destroyed, and the Æsir gods themselves shall perish, and their places shall be filled by a new creation and new and brighter gods." This dark myth is by some writers regarded as a foreshadowing of the downfall of paganism and the advent of a higher civilisation and purer religion under the Christian dispensation.

Tempests and the howling of the wind appear to have been regarded with superstitious reverence from the earliest times in the British islands. Plutarch speaks of the return to Delphos from Britain of a certain grammarian, named Demetrius, who related some curious stories with respect to the then but little known country. Amongst other things the travelled sage narrated to Plutarch and his friends the following story:—"There are many desert islands scattered about Britain, some of which have the name of being the islands of genii and heroes; that he had been sent by the emperor, for the sake of describing and viewing them, to that which lay nearest to the desert isles, and which had but few inhabitants; all of whom were esteemed by the Britons sacred and inviolable. Very soon after his arrival there was great turbulence in the air, and many portentous storms; the winds became tempestuous, and fiery whirlwinds rushed forth. When these ceased, the islanders said that the departure of some one of the superior genii had taken place. For, as a light when burning, say they, has nothing disagreeable, but when extinguished, is offensive to many; so likewise lofty spirits afford an illumination benignant and mild, but their extinction and destruction frequently, as at the present moment, excite winds and storms, and often infect the atmosphere with pestilential evils. Moreover, that there was one island there, where Saturn was confined by Briareus in sleep: for that sleep had been devised for his bonds; and that around him were many genii as his companions and attendants."

Singularly enough, M. Du Chaillu, in his "Journey to Ashango-land," found a similar superstition to obtain amongst the West Coast Equatorial Africans. They believe that the Oguisi or "spirit" brings the plague amongst them in the form of a whirlwind. An impression got abroad that the white man who was advancing into their territories was the veritable Oguisi, and consequently, owing to their fetich superstition, they expected disaster therefrom. He says:—"The King of the Niembouai, like most of the other monarchs of these regions, did not show himself on my arrival—he was absent until about noon

to-day. I have been told that the reason why the chiefs keep away from the villages until I have been in them some time is, that they have a notion that I bring with me a whirlwind which may do them some great harm; so they wait until it has had time to blow away from the village before they make their appearance."

It is somewhat remarkable that the tradition of the "wild hunt," or the "furious host," has become obsolete, or nearly so, in Ireland, inasmuch as that country has preserved, with much minuteness, many other Aryan myths. What does remain in Ireland, however, is singularly in accordance with the properties assigned to the elder storm gods, Indra and Rudra, and their followers, the Rhibus and the Maruts, in the Rig Veda.

A writer in the *Athenæum*, in 1847, makes the following observations:—"The ideas of the Irish peasantry respecting the state of departed souls are very singular. According to the tenets of the church to which the majority of them belong, the souls of the departed are either in paradise, hell, or purgatory. But popular belief assigns the air as a fourth place of suffering, where unquiet souls wander about until their period of penance is past. On a cold, or wet, or stormy night, the peasant will exclaim with real sympathy 'Musha! God help the poor souls that are in the shelter of the ditches, or under the eaves this way!' And the good 'chanathee' or mother of a family will sweep the hearth, that the poor souls may warm themselves when the family retires. The conviction that the spirits of the departed sweep along with the storm or shiver in the driving rain, is singularly wild and near akin to the Scandinavian myth." The identity of this superstition with some of the Aryan myths, is very easily perceived. Kelly says:—"Indra has for friends and followers the Maruts, or spirits of the winds, whose host consists, at least in part, of the souls of the pious dead; and the Ribhus, who are of similar origin, but whose element is rather that of the sunbeams or the lightning, though they too rule the winds, and sing like the Maruts the loud song of the storm."

The same writer gives the following graphic description of the popular feeling and action on the approach of this mythic cavalcade:—"The first token which the furious host gives of its approach is a low song that makes the hearer's flesh creep. The grass and the leaves of the forest wave and bow in the moonshine as often as the strain begins anew. Presently the sounds come nearer and nearer, and swell into the music of a thousand instruments. Then bursts the hurricane, and the oaks of the forest come crashing down. The spectral appearance

often presents itself in the shape of a great black coach, on which sit hundreds of spirits singing a wonderfully sweet song. Before it goes a man, who loudly warns everybody to get out of the way. All who hear him must instantly drop down with their faces to the ground, as at the coming of the wild hunt, and hold fast by something, were it only a blade of grass; for the furious host has been known to force many a man into its coach and carry him hundreds of miles away through the air."

The black coach version of the legend of the furious host yet survives in the North of England. Mr. Henderson says:—"Night after night, too, when it is sufficiently dark, the headless coach whirls along the rough approach to Langley Hall, near Durham, drawn by black and fiery steeds." In a work entitled "Rambles in Northumberland," it is referred to in the following terms:—"When the death-hearse, drawn by headless horses, and driven by a headless driver, is seen about midnight, proceeding rapidly, but without noise, towards the churchyard, the death of some considerable person in the parish is sure to happen at no distant period." It is likewise referred to in Rees' Diary as a "vision of a coach drawn by six black swine, and driven by a black driver."

Grose says:—"We sometimes read of ghosts striking violent blows; and that, if not made way for, they overturn all impediment, *like a furious whirlwind.*" Yet singularly enough in the same paragraph, speaking on the authority of Glanvil of the apparition of an old woman, he informs us that "if a tree stood in her walk," the spectator "observed her always to go through it." Notwithstanding this feat, the old lady must have had some materiality about her, for on being lifted from the ground by human hands at her request, her ghostship "felt just like a bag of feathers."

"The furious host" seems to have differed in some legends from the "wild hunt" of Odin and his followers, and yet in others they appear as it were in combination. Indeed, the name Woden, itself, signifies the "Furious One;" and hence, doubtless, we have the link which legitimately connects them together. "*Wud*" still signifies "mad" in some existing Scottish dialects. The hounds of the "spectre huntsman" are believed to be human souls transformed into air; which in their wild career strip the hedges of the linen placed there to dry; they eat up or scatter abroad meal and the ashes that lay on the peasant's hearth. The hound sometimes left behind in the household, through which the wild hunt has passed, is supposed to repose on the hearth for a whole year, during which time it lives

upon ashes, and howls and whines, until the spectre horseman returns, when it jumps on its feet, wags its tail with joy, and rejoins its ancient comrades. Kelly says:—"There is only one way amongst the Germans of ridding the house sooner of the unwelcome guest, and that is to brew beer in eggshells. The hound watches the operation and exclaims

> Though I am now as old as the old Bohemian wold,
> Yet the like of this I ween, in my life I ne'er have seen.

And it goes, and is seen no more. On Christmas evenings especially, that is to say, at the season of the winter solstice, it is very unsafe to leave linen hanging out of doors, for the wild huntsman's hounds will tear it to pieces." The soughing of the wind through crevices, windows, or doorways in buildings, or narrow passages in the hills, like that at Cliviger, was believed to be the howling of Odin's hounds, and to indicate the passage of "the furious host."

This spectre hound or dog is a very common sprite in Lancashire. I remember well being terrified in my youth in Preston, by Christmas recitals of strange stories of its appearance, and the misfortune which its howling was said to forebode. The Preston black dog was without a head, which rendered the said howling still more mysterious to my youthful imagination. A gentleman recently related to me a story respecting this "dog-fiend," which he had direct from a Manchester tradesman's own lips, who thoroughly believed in the supernatural character of his nocturnal assailant. This tradesman, a Mr. Drabble, assured my friend that the celebrated black headless dog-fiend, on one occasion, about the year 1825, suddenly appeared before, or rather behind, him, not far from the then Collegiate Church; and, placing its fore paws upon his shoulders, actually ran him home at a rapid rate, in spite of his strenuous resistance. He was so terrified at the incident that he rushed into bed in his dirty clothes, much to the surprise and dismay of his family. This particular dog-boggart is believed yet by many to have been "laid" and buried under the dry arch of the old bridge across the Irwell, on the Salford side of the river; and that the spell to which it has been subjected will endure for 999 years, which, I suppose, in vulgar as well as legal parlance, is supposed to be nearly equivalent to the more comprehensive term—"for ever."

In Larwood and Hotten's "History of Signboards," I find the following:—"This Black Dog may have derived its name from the canine spectre that still frightens the ignorant and fearful in the rural districts, just as the terrible Dun Cow and the Lambton Worm were

the terror of the people in olden times. Near Lyme Regis, Dorset, there is an alehouse which has this black fiend in all his ancient ugliness painted over the door. Its adoption there arose from a legend that the spectral black dog used to haunt at nights the kitchen fire of a neighbouring farm-house, formerly a Royalist mansion, destroyed by Cromwell's troops. The dog would sit opposite the farmer; but one night a little extra liquor gave the man additional courage, and he struck at the dog, intending to rid himself of the horrid thing. Away, however, flew the dog, and the farmer after him, from one room to another, until it sprang through the roof, and was seen no more that night. In mending the hole, a lot of money fell down, which, of course, was connected in some way or other with the dog's strange visit. Near the house is a lane still called Dog Lane, which is now the favourite walk of the black dog, and to this *genius loci* the sign is dedicated."

I am inclined to think that the "Trash" or "Skriker" described by Mr. Wilkinson, of Burnley, has some relationship to the strayed hound of Odin, and more especially so, as the spectre huntsman is well known in the neighbourhood of the Cliviger gorge. He says:—

"The appearance of this sprite is considered a certain death-sign, and has obtained the local names of 'Trash' or 'Skriker.' He generally appears to one of the family from which death is about to select his victim, and is more or less visible according to the distance of the event. I have met with persons to whom the barghaist has assumed the form of a white cow or a horse; but on most occasions 'Trash' is described as having the appearance of a large dog, with very broad feet, shaggy hair, drooping ears, and 'eyes as large as saucers.' When walking, his feet make a loud splashing noise, like old shoes in a miry road, and hence the name of 'Trash.' The appellation, 'Skriker,' has reference to the screams uttered by the sprite, which are frequently heard when the animal is invisible. When followed by any individual, he begins to walk backwards, with his eyes fixed full on his pursuer, and vanishes on the slightest momentary inattention. Occasionally he plunges into a pool of water, and at other times he sinks at the feet of the person to whom he appears with a loud splashing noise, as if a heavy stone was thrown into the miry road. Some are reported to have attempted to strike him with any weapon they had at hand, but there was no substance present to receive the blows, although the Skriker kept his ground. He is said to frequent the neighbourhood of Burnley at present, and is mostly seen in Godly Lane and about the Parochial Church; but

he by no means confines his visits to the churchyard, as similar sprites are said to do in other parts of England and Wales."

Grose tells us that dogs have "the faculty of seeing spirits," and he instances the case of one David Hunter, a neatherd to the Bishop of Down and Connor, whose dog accompanied him *quietly*, when, from an impulse he was unable to restrain, he wandered after the apparition of an old woman by which he was haunted. "But," Grose adds, "they usually show signs of terror, by whining and creeping to their master for protection; and it is generally supposed that they often see things of this nature when their owner cannot; there being some persons, particularly those born on a Christmas-eve, who cannot see spirits."

Max Müller etymologically identifies the classic Cerberus or Kerberos with the Vedic Sarvari, "the dog of night, watching the path to the lower world." Grimm says that the dog is an embodiment of the wind and an attendant of the dead both in the mythology of the Germans and the Arians, and that both these attributes are conspicuous in the wild hunt superstitions. Dogs, he adds, see ghosts, as well as the goddess of death, Hel, although she is invisible to human eyes. Kuhn contends that the name of Yama's canine messengers, Sârameyas, was borne in Greek form, by the messenger of the Greek gods, Hermeias or Hermes, the conductor of the shades of the departed to the realm of Hades. With the aid of Athenê, Hermes conducted Heracles in safety, with the dog Kerberos, out of Hades.

In the "Merry Devil of Edmonton" (1631) is the following reference to this superstition:—

> I know thee well; I heare the watchfull dogs,
> With hollow howling, tell of thy approach;
> The lights burne dim, affrighted with thy presence;
> And this distempered and tempestuous night
> Tells me the ayre is troubled with some devill.

The superstition that the howling of a dog, especially in the night time, portends the death of some person in the immediate neighbourhood, is yet, at the present day, firmly believed in, even by the middle, and by no means uneducated, classes in Lancashire. I listened, not very long ago, to the serious recital of a story by one who heard the howling and knew well the party whose death immediately followed. He himself, being sick at the time, deemed his own end approaching, but was relieved of his terror on being informed that a well-known neighbour had just expired.

It is by no means improbable that the extremely delicate sense of smell possessed by some of the canine species or varieties, as especi-

ally exhibited in the scenting of game and carrion or putrid flesh, may have influenced the original personification of the dog as an attendant on the dead.

Charles Dickens, in a recent Christmas story, describes, with his usual felicity, a rather singular phase of this "howling hound" superstition. It appears that Dr. Marigold's dog, true to the instincts of his blustering race, could snuff an approaching storm of a "domestic" character with the most unerring precision. Certainly there are localities in which the blasts of old Boreas, and the storm songs of the Maruts, are infinitely more disagreeable than they are in certain others. To encounter them alone on the bleak mountain top, or in a wild gorge, like that of Cliviger, on an "old-fashioned Christmas" or New Year's-eve, is not productive of exactly the same kind of satisfaction as results from attentively listening to their wild harmonies when seated in a warm corner of one's own "snuggery," with plenty of good cheer, and a select few of tried old friends partaking of the hospitality characteristic of the season. Dr. Marigold, who is neither more nor less than the witty and loquacious "Cheap John," of mock-auction renown, thinks, very properly, that his peripatetic place of business was a very unsuitable locality for domestic hurricanes. He says:—"We might have had such a pleasant life. A roomy cart, with the large goods hung outside, and the bed slung underneath it when on the road, an iron pot and kettle, a fire-place for the cold weather, a chimney for the smoke, a hanging-shelf and a cupboard, a dog, and a horse. What more do you want? You draw off on a bit of turf in a green lane or by the roadside, you hobble your old horse and turn him grazing, you light your fire upon the ashes of the last visitors', you cook your stew, and you would not call the Emperor of France your father. But have a *temper* in the cart, flinging language and the hardest goods in stock at you, and where are you then? Put a name to your feelings! My dog knew as well when she was on the turn as I did. Before she broke out, he would give a howl, and bolt. How he knew it was a mystery to me, but the sure and certain knowledge of it would wake him up out of his soundest sleep, and he would give a howl and bolt. At such times I wished I was him."

The large "saucer eyes" of Skriker, and his "*vanishing* on the slightest momentary inattention," are suggestive of some connection with lightning or the ignis-fatuus, or wild fire; and, singularly enough, I find Will-o'-whisp traditions bear considerable resemblance to those which appertain to the furious host. Mr. Thoms, in his "Shaks-

pere Notelets," has some curious information on this subject. He says :—

"According to some these phantoms are believed to be the souls of children who have died unbaptised; while others again believe them to be the restless spirits of wicked and covetous men, who have not scrupled, for the sake of their own aggrandisement, to remove their neighbours' landmarks. In Brittany, we learn from Villemarqué, the *Porte-brandon* appears in the form of a child bearing a torch, which he turns like a burning wheel; and with this it is said he sets fire to the villages, which are sometimes suddenly in the middle of the night wrapped in flames. In Lusatia, where these wandering children are also supposed to be the souls of unbaptised children, they are believed to be perfectly harmless, and to be relieved from their destined wanderings as soon as any pious hand throws a handful of consecrated ground after them."

This form of superstition prevails yet to a considerable extent in the north of England and Scotland.

The Maruts or storm-winds of the Sanscrit myths, who rode on tawny-coloured horses, roared like lions, shook the mountains, and tore up trees, when their wild work was done, Max Müller informs us, assumed again, "according to their wont, the form of new born babes," a phrase which, as Mr. Cox justly observes, "exhibits the germ, and more than the germ, of the myth of Hermes returning like a child to his cradle after tearing up the forests." Hermes, as a personification of both the gentle breeze and the stormy wind, gives forth soothing as well as martial music, and his plaintive breath was supposed "to waft the spirits of the dead to their unseen home." Crantz says the Greenland Esquimaux "lay a dog's head by the grave of a child, for the soul of a dog can find its way everywhere, and will show the ignorant babe the way to the land of souls." The Parsees place a dog before the dying, from a similar superstitious belief.

There is much probability in the suggestion that Shakspere had some of these superstitions in view when he placed in the mouth of Macbeth, while contemplating the murder, and its consequences, of the "gracious Duncan," the following magnificent metaphors :—

> And Pity, like a naked new-born babe,
> Striding the blast, or Heaven's cherubim, horsed
> Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
> Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
> That tears shall drown the wind!

The furious host, in the German versions, is sometimes "a cavalcade of the dead," and not exactly a wild hunt, in the ordinary

acceptation of the term. Kelly says:—"Sometimes it gallops through the stormy air as a herd of wild boars; but the spirits of which it consists generally appear in human form. They are of both sexes and of all ages, souls of unchristened babes being included among them; for Holda or Bertha often joins the hunt." When Odin rides at the head of a full field, he is believed to chase a horse or a wild boar; but when he alone appears at the heels of his yelping pack, it "is in pursuit of a woman with long snow-white breasts. Seven years he follows her; at last he runs her down, throws her across his horse, and carries her home." These seven years are regarded by commentators as having reference to the seven winter months of the year, during which "the spell bound" lightning and storm god was unable, owing to the prevailing cold weather, to continue in active chase of his flying bride. This latter myth concerning the chased maiden seems to be the counterpart or prototype of the spectre huntsman, who "is believed to pursue a milk-white doe round the Eagle's Crag, in the Vale of Todmorden, on All-Hallow Eve," as related by Mr. Wilkinson. In Germany the wild hunt chases a whole flock of elfish beings, the moss-wifekins and wood-maidens, whose lives are bound up with those of the forest trees. Holda and Bertha are but local or characteristic appellations for the goddess Freyja (whence our Friday), the wife of Odin. In some parts of Germany the wild hunt is called the dead hunt (Heljagd), and, in others, the English hunt *(die Engelske jagd)*, which are synonymous, England being but, at one period, "another name for the nether world." Hel or Hela, was the name of both the Scandinavian and German goddess of death. Kuhn, referring to the dispute whether the ancient locality of departed souls was Great Britain or Brittany, decides in favour of the former, and informs us that the German peasants to this day use such expressions as the following: "How the bells are ringing in England!" "How my children are crying in England!" when referring to the nether or lower regions.

The dismal realm of Hela, which was a journey of nine days' dreary descent from Heaven, was termed Niflheimr, the world of mists. It was said to be situated under one of the roots of the great world-tree, Yggdrasil, but it appears not to have been regarded, like the modern Hel, as a place of torment or punishment for sins committed on earth. It seems to have had more relationship to the Greek Hades. All departed souls, good and evil, dwelt in Hela's realm, with the exception of those of heroes slain in battle, which were conveyed at once to Valhalla, by Odin himself. Kelly says:—

"But the idea of retribution after death for crimes done in the body was not unknown to German paganism. It was part of the Aryan creed, and the Vedas speak of the goddess Nirriti, and her dreadful world Naraka, the destined abode of all guilty souls. It is not conceivable that such a tradition could have died out, even for a time, amongst any of the pagan Indo-Europeans."

In support of his position, Kelly cites the following passage from Kemble's "Saxons in England":—

"For the perjurer and the secret murderer Nástrond existed, a place of torment and punishment—the strand of the dead—filled with foulness, peopled with poisonous serpents, dark, cold, and gloomy; the kingdom of Hel was *Hades*, the invisible, the world of shadows; Nástrond was what we call Hell."

Kelly further contends that as "the heaven of the (Aryan) Pitris is often called 'the world of good deed, the world of the righteous,' and as they themselves were spirits of light and ministers of all good men, there is strong reason for inferring, although the fact is nowhere expressly stated, that the inhabitants of the opposite world became spirits of darkness, and confederates of all the evil powers." He adds,—"If this conjecture prove to be well founded, it will have brought to light another remarkable instance of the continuity of Aryan tradition."

The Rev. G. W. Cox, however, scarcely indorses this view of the Gothic Hell and Devil. He says,—"Hel had been like Persephonê, the queen of the unseen land,—in the ideas of the northern tribes, a land of bitter cold and icy walls. She now became not the queen of Niflheim, but Niflheim itself, while her abode, though gloomy enough, was not wholly destitute of material comforts. It became the Hell where the old man hews wood for the Christmas fire, and where the Devil in his eagerness to buy the flitch of bacon yields up the marvellous quern which is 'good to grind almost anything.' It was not so pleasant, indeed, as Heaven, or the old Valhalla, but it was better to be there than shut out in the outer cold beyond its padlocked gates. But more particularly the Devil was a being who under pressure of hunger might be drawn into acting against his own interest, in other words he might be outwitted, and this character of a poor or stupid devil is almost the only one exhibited in Teutonic legends. In fact, as Professor Max Müller remarks, the Germans, when they had been 'indoctrinated with the idea of a real devil, the Semitic Satan or Diabolus, treated him in the most good-humoured manner;' nor is it easy to resist Dr. Dasent's conclusion that 'no greater proof can be

given of the small hold which the Christian Devil has taken of the Norse mind than the heathen aspect under which he constantly appears, and the ludicrous way in which he is always outwitted.'" Mr. Cox adds, in a note, that it has "been said of Southey that he could never think of the devil without laughing. This is but saying that he had the genuine humour of our Teutonic ancestors."

Dasent, in his "Popular Tales from the Norse," says,—"The Christian notion of Hell is that of a place of heat, for in the East, whence Christianity came, heat is often an intolerable torment, and cold, on the other hand, everything that is pleasant and delightful. But to the dwellers in the North heat brings with it sensations of joy and comfort, and life without fire has a dreary outlook; so their Hel ruled in a cold region over those who were cowards by implication, while the mead-cup went round and huge logs blazed and crackled in Valhalla for the brave and beautiful who had dared to die on the field of battle. But under Christianity the extremes of heat and cold have met, and Hel, the cold, uncomfortable goddess, is now our Hell, where flames and fires abound, and where the devils abide in everlasting flame."

How grandly has Shakspere expressed the various traditionary forms respecting the lost soul's lodgment or condition after death, in "Measure for Measure." In act 3, scene 1, Claudio exclaims:—

> Ay, but to die and go we know not where,
> To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
> This sensible warm motion to become
> A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
> To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
> In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
> To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
> Of those, that lawless and incertain thoughts
> Imagine howling! 'tis too horrible!
> The wearied and most loathed worldly life,
> That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
> Can lay on nature, is a paradise
> To what we fear of death.

It is a common superstition yet that the ghosts of persons, murdered or otherwise, not buried in consecrated ground, cannot rest, but must wander about in search of the means of Christian sepulture. This superstition obtained amongst the Greeks and Latins. The ghosts of unburied bodies, not possessing the *obolus* or fee due to Charon, the ferryman of the *Styx* or *Acheron*, were unable to obtain a lodging or place of rest. They were, therefore, compelled to wander

about the banks of the river for a hundred years, when the *Portitor* or "ferryman of hell" passed them over, *in forma pauperis*. Hence the sacred nature of the duty of surviving relatives and friends under the most trying circumstances. The celebrated tragedy of Antigone, by Sophocles, owes its chief interest and pathos to the popular faith on this subject.

Brand on the authority of Aubrey, states that, amongst the vulgar in Yorkshire, it was believed, "and, perhaps, is in part still," that, after a person's death, the soul went over Whinney Moor; and till about 1624, at the funeral, a woman came (like a Præfica) and sung the following song :—

This ean night, this ean night,
Every night and awle,
Fire and fleet *(water)* and candle-light,
And Christ receive thy sawle.

When thou from hence doest pass away,
Every night and awle,
To Whinny-Moor [silly poor] thou comest at last,
And Christ receive thy sawle.

If ever thou gave hosen or shoon [shoes],
Every night and awle,
Sit thee down and put them on,
And Christ receive thy sawle.

But if hosen and shoon thou never gave naen,
Every night and awle,
The whinnes shall prick thee to the bare beane,
And Christ receive thy sawle.

From Whinny-Moor that thou mayst pass,
Every night and awle,
To Brig of Dread thou comest at last,
And Christ receive thy soul.

From Brig of Dread, na brader than a thread,
Every night and awle,
To purgatory fire thou com'st at last,
And Christ receive thy sawle.

If ever thou give either milke or drink,
Every night and awle,
The fire shall never make thee shrink,
And Christ receive thy sawle.

But if milk nor drink thou never gave naen,
Every night and awle,
The fire shall burn thee to the bare beane,
And Christ receive thy sawle.

In the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," this song is printed with one or two slight variations, with the title of a "Lyke-Wake

Dirge." Sir Walter Scott likewise quotes a passage from a MS. in the Cotton Library, descriptive of Cleveland in the northern part of Yorkshire, in Elizabeth's reign, which aptly illustrates this custom. It is as follows:—

"When any dieth certaine women sing a song to the dead bodie, reciting the journey that the partye deceased must goe, and they are of beliefe (such is their fondnesse) that once in their lives it is good to give a pair of new shoes to a poor man, for as much as after this life they are to pass barefoote through a great launde, full of thorns and furzen, except by the meryte of the almes aforesaid they have redemed the forfeyte; for at the edge of the launde an olde man shall meet them with the same shoes that were given by the partie when he was lyving, and after he had shodde them, dismisseth them to go through thick and thin without scratch or scalle."

According to Mannhardt and Grimm a pair of shoes was deposited in the grave, in Scandinavia and Germany, for this very purpose. In the Henneberg district, on this account, the name *todtenschuh*, or "dead shoe" is applied to a funeral. In Scandinavia the shoe is named *helskö*, or "hel-shoe."

It is customary yet in some parts of the North of England to place a plate filled with salt on the stomach of a corpse soon after death. Lighted candles too, are sometimes placed on or about the body. Reginald Scot says, in his "Discourse concerning Devils and Spirits," on the authority of Bodin, that "the devil loveth no salt in his meat, for that is a sign of eternity, and used by God's commandment in all sacrifices." Douce, speaking of this practice, particularly in Leicestershire, says it is done with the view of preventing air from getting into the bowels and swelling the body. Herrick, in his "Hesperides," says:—

The Soul is the Salt.

The body's salt the soul is, which, when gone,
The flesh soon sucks in putrifaction.

According to the learned Moresin the devil abhorreth salt, it being the emblem of eternity and immortality. It is not liable to corruption itself, and it preserves other substances from decay. Hence its superstitious or emblematical import.

The screaming of certain birds, as we have already seen, foreboded disaster. In some districts the midnight flight of flocks of migratory seafowl are believed to be the cause of the noises in the atmosphere, which the peasant's imagination translates into the rush of the furious host. Mr. Yarrell, in "Notes and Queries," says that flocks

of bean-geese, from Scandinavia and Scotland, when flying over various parts of England, select very dark nights for their migrations, and that their flight is accompanied by a very loud and very peculiar cry. The "seven whistlers," referred to by Wordsworth, and others already quoted, in some instances appear to be curlews, whose screams are believed by fishermen to announce the approach of a tempest.

The bellowing of cows at unseasonable hours was likewise regarded as an announcement of death, as well as the howling of the dog. Cows in the Aryan mythology represented the rain clouds. Odin and his host, nevertheless, seem to have fancied the earthly article. They were said to carry cows away, milk them dry, and, in about three days, generally return them, but not always. It was idle for the farmer to refuse complying, as when the furious host appeared, the fattest animals in the stalls became restive, and on being let loose suddenly disappeared.

The Lancashire peasant, in some districts, still believes the "Milky Way" to be the path by which departed souls enter Heaven. Mr. Benjamin Brierley, in one of his Lancashire stories, places in the mouth of one of his strongly marked provincial characters, the following expression,—"When tha goes up 'th cow lone (lane) to th' better place," and he assures me that he has often heard the expression from the lips of the peasantry. The Germans entertain a similar belief in the "Milky Way" being the spirit path to heaven. In Friesland its name is *kaupat*, or cowpath. The giving of a cow to the poor, while on earth, was considered to confer upon the donor the power to pass with certainty the fearful Gjallar bridge; for, as in the Vedic superstition, a cow, (or cloud,) would be present to aid his soul to make the passage in safety. Mannhardt informs us that "hence it was of yore a funeral custom in Sweden, Denmark, England, Upper and Lower Germany, that a cow should follow the coffin to the churchyard. This custom was partially continued until recent times, being accounted for on the ground that the cow was a gift to the clergy for saying masses for the dead man's soul or preaching his funeral sermon."

It is not improbable that the "mortuary" or "heriot" of the olden time, which rendered the gift of a cow to the church, on the death of a parishioner, as a condonement of possibly unpaid dues, a necessary condition of clerical favour, was based on some such superstition. It was customary, in some places, to drive the cow in the procession of the funeral *cortége* to the place of sepulture. Mr. E. Baines, speaking of the manor of Ashton-under-Lyne, says:—"The

obnoxious feudal *heriot*, consisting of the best beast on the farm, required to be given to the lord, on the death of the farmer, was a cruel and unmanly exaction, in illustration of which there are many traditionary stories in the manor of Ashton, and no doubt in other manors. The priest, as well as the lord of the manor, claimed his heriot, called a mortuary in these early times, on the death of his parishioners, as a kind of expiation for the personal tithes, which the deceased in his lifetime had neglected to pay." He adds that the custom was in Ashton for "*holy kirk*" to take the *best* beast, and the lord of the manor the *second* best.

To those who treated Odin with proper respect when he and his hunters passed by, he is said to have dropped a horse's leg or haunch, which turned to gold. Those who mocked him received a similar present, or "moss-wifekin's foot, with the green shoe upon it." But the limb in the latter case became fœtid, and the horrible stench resulting therefrom defied all attempts to remove it.

All of these legends have been resolved into figurative and sometimes highly poetic descriptions of natural phenomena, and especially what is termed the "elemental strife." The horse's leg thrown down by Odin represents the crooked lightning's flash; the gold its brightness, and the stench its sulphurous odour. The wild boars which he hunts are stormy wind-clouds; the fair ladies the light white scudding vapours that seem to coquette with the squally wind. Odin's broad-brimmed hat is the dark cloud, and his mantle the starry heavens. Kelly says—"The moss-wifekins and wood-maidens are female elementary spirits brought down to the earth from the clouds to become genii of the forest, and when they are chased *in whole flocks*—or, in other words, when the leaves are blown off the trees—this is but a modification of the older conception of flying clouds. . . The wild huntsman loves to ride through houses that have two outer doors directly opposite to each other; that is to say, in plain prose, a thorough draft, more or less strong, from one door to the other."

Mr. Ruskin, in his recent lectures at Oxford, as "Slade Professor of Fine Art," gives an admirable example from paintings on an ancient vase, of the manner in which Greek artistic genius gradually evolved from out of natural phenomena, their mythological personifications. He says,—

"First you have Apollo ascending from the sea; thought of as the *physical sunrise*: only a circle of light for his head; his chariot horses seen foreshortened, black against the daybreak, their feet not yet risen above the horizon. Underneath is the painting from the

opposite side of the same vase: Athena as the morning breeze, and Hermes as the morning cloud, flying across the waves before sunrise. At the distance I now hold them from you, it is scarcely possible for you to see that they are figures at all, so like are they to broken fragments of flying mist; and when you look close you will see that as Apollo's face is invisible in the circle of light, Mercury's is invisible in the broken form of cloud; but I can tell you that it is conceived as reverted, looking back to Athena; the grotesque appearance of feature in the front is the outline of his hair. These two paintings are exceedingly rude, and of the archæic period; the deities being yet thought of chiefly as physical powers in violent agency."

Max Müller contends that the earlier Aryan name for the Rhibus, namely Arbhus, is identical with the Greek Orpheus. Philologists, by the aid of the earlier Sanscrit writings, have been enabled to get at the roots of many Greek names, which formerly defied investigation. We see in the musical influence of Orpheus over trees, rocks, and mountain torrents, but a highly artistic development of the original Aryan storm-wind myth. By certain well understood philological steps, the term Arbhus has passed, in its Teutonic descent, into Albs, Alb, or Alp, which in the plural yields Elbe and Elfen, the equivalents of our English Elf and Elves.

Another remnant of the Aryan nomenclature of the train of Odin, the wild huntsman, may be found in the word mârt or maur, as presented in the English word nightmare, and the French couchemar, which are evidently descended from the Maruts or windgods of the Vedas. The nightmare is known to result chiefly from that form of dyspepsia termed flatulent. The corruption of the word in English to mare has given rise to some singular blunders, and none greater or more absurd than that perpetrated by Fuseli, the Royal Academician, in his celebrated picture of "The Nightmare," in which he represents the fiend in equine form bestraddling his unhappy victim. Kelly says he can find accounts of the nightmare assuming the forms of a mouse, a weasel, a toad, and even a cat, but never that of a horse or a mare, except in the picture referred to. The fact is, the genuine nightmare is the rider who plies his spurs and grips the reins, and not a mare that has usurped the function of a jockey. Aubrey, in his "Miscellanies," describes one phase of the superstition as a remnant of witchcraft. "To hinder the nightmare, they hang in a string a flint with a hole in it. It is to prevent the nightmare, viz., the hag, from riding their horses, who will sometimes sweat at night. The flint thus hung does hinder it." Brand ob-

serves that "ephialtes, or nightmare, is called by common people *witch-riding*." He traces the superstition to the Gothic or Scandinavian Mara, "a spectre of the night."

In classical mythology Pan was regarded as the author of sudden frights or groundless alarms. Dr. Adam, in his "Roman Antiquities," says that Faunus and Sylvanus were "supposed to be the same with Pan." He further adds,—"There were several rural deities called Fauni, who were believed to occasion the nightmare."

It is not improbable that the modern equine form of the hag may have resulted from ordinary punning. Lluellin (1679) has the following stanza, which refers to the power of coral over the night-mare. Hence the prejudice in favour of coral beads for children which obtains to this day:—

> Some the night-mare hath prest
> With that weight on their breast,
> No returnes of their breath can passe.
> But to us the tale is addle,
> We can take off her saddle,
> And turn out the night-mare to grasse.

Another old writer, Holiday, in his "Marriage of the Arts," deprecates the practice of relying on charms, "that your stables may bee alwies free from the queene of the goblins." He, however, makes the night-hag equestrian or jockey, and not equine. Herrick, too, in his "Hesperides," is both correct and explicit on the subject. He says:—

> Hang up hooks and shears to scare
> Hence the hag that rides the mare
> Till they be all over wet
> With the mire and the sweat;
> This observed, the manes shall be
> Of your horses all knot free.

The term "nightmare," in some instances, may have been applied to a witch transformed into a mare by means of a magic bridle, and ridden with great violence by the very party at whose bed-side she had previously metamorphosed into a steed, on the back of which she had galloped to the witches' revel. If the man-horse contrived to slip off the bridle, and throw it over the witch's head, she immediately became transformed into a mare, and was frequently, according to popular belief, subjected to much harsh usage. There appears, however, to be little doubt that the night-mares are legitimately descended from the Aryan Maruts, the "couriers of the air," who rode the winds in the "wild hunt," or "furious host," headed

by Odin, or the renowned spectre horseman of mediæval legends. Kelly says, "these riders, in all other respects identical with the Maruts, are in some parts of Germany called Wabriderske, *i.e.*, Valkyrs. In some of the tales that are told of them they still retain their old divine nature; in others they are brought down to the level of mere earthly witches. If they ride now in stables, without locomotion, it is because they swept of old through the air on their divine coursers. Now they steal by night to the beds of hinds and churls; but there was a time when they descended from Valhalla to conceive, in the embrace of a mortal, the demigod whom they afterwards accompanied to the battle-field, to bear him thence to the hall of Odin."

I entertain a strong impression that the singular ceremony practised at Ashton-under-Lyne, at Easter, styled "*Riding the Black Lad*," contains some remnant of the tradition of the spectre huntsman. Its origin is confessed on all hands to be extremely doubtful. The severities of a Sir Ralph Assheton, in the reign of Henry VI., may have had something to do with it, but they alone could scarcely have perpetuated the legend and its accessories. The custom of perambulating the parish boundaries, still in use in many parts of England, and which, in my own youth, was performed with much solemnity by the Corporation of Preston, may likewise have had some influence upon the practice. At the close of the Preston perambulation, it was customary for the younger spirits "to leap the colt-hole," as it was termed, the said "colt-hole" being a ditch or fosse on Preston Marsh. Some unlucky wights occasionally fell into the said ditch, to the infinite amusement of the graver dignitaries, as well as to the merriment of the holiday schoolboys attendant. Dr. Hibbert Ware, referring to the Ashton custom, says:—"An effigy is made of a man in armour, and the image is deridingly emblazoned with some emblems of the occupation of the first couple that are linked together in the course of the year." The story of the enforcing of the weeding of "Carr gulds" (an obnoxious plant) from the land by Sir Ralph's rough riding, may have had some foundation in fact; but it is rather strange a successor should have "abolished the usage for ever, and reserved from the estate a small sum of money, for the purpose of perpetuating, in an annual ceremony, the memory of the dreaded visits of the Black Knight."

Spelman, in his "Icenia," referring to the Tilney legend concerning Tom Hickathrift and his giant slaying, clearly shows that the "monstrous giant," slain by Tom, armed with his axle and wheel,

like the Cornish Tom the Tinkheard, and his followers, was none other than the tyrant lord of the manor who sought by violence to rob his copy-hold tenants out of their right of pasture in the common field.

Samuel Bamford, in his poem of the "Wild Rider," relates a legend not uncommon in various parts of the country, about a Sir Ashton Lever, a lover of a descendant of the Black Knight, who seems to have rivalled him in horsemanship. Bamford, in a note, says:— "He was an excellent bowman and a fearless rider, and tradition has handed down stories of feats of horsemanship analogous to those recited in the ballad, accompanied with sage intimations that *no horse could have carried him save one of more than earthly breed or human training*." The narrow valley of the Tame, in the neighbourhood of Ashton, is as likely as the gorge at Cliviger to be haunted by the storm-rider or the wild hunt. Singularly enough, Mr. Baines, in his History of Lancashire, relates minutely the particulars of two tremendous storms which devastated the locality, one in 1817, and the other 26 years previously. They both created much dismay, and the latter, he says, caused "an involuntary expression of horror throughout the whole place." A neighbouring exposed hill is named the "Wild Bank." Around it storms often rage with great fury. In one of the Welsh triads, we find that the "three embellishing names of the wind" are "Hero of the World, Architect of Bad Weather, and Assaulter of the Hills." It has been previously shown the spectre huntsman of Dartmoor is styled the "*Black* Master," which lends further probability to the hypothesis advanced.

Since the bulk of the preceding pages in this chapter were written, I obtained a copy of Mr. R. Hunt's recently published work, entitled "Popular Romances of the West of England; or the Drolls, Traditions, and Superstitions of Old Cornwall." In it I find several curious and highly interesting variations of the legend or myth of the spectre huntsman, or the furious host, which exhibit not only the connection of the wandering Jew tradition with that of the hunt of Odin and his followers, but which I conceive throw much light upon, and, to a large extent, countenance the hypothesis I have submitted, that the legend of the celebrated black knight, or "black lad," of Ashton-under-Lyne, retains, along with more modern additions, something of the original Aryan personification of the "elemental strife" previously described. Speaking of the "demon Tregeagle," a well-known legendary hero of "Old Cornwall," he says:—

"Who has not heard of the wild spirit of Tregeagle? He haunts

equally the moor, the rocky coasts, and the blown sandhills of Cornwall. From north to south, from east to west, this doomed spirit is heard of, *and to the day of judgment he is doomed to wander*, pursued by avenging fiends. For ever endeavouring to perform some task by which he hopes to secure repose, and being for ever defeated. Who has not heard of the *howling* of Tregeagle? When the storms come with all their strength from the Atlantic, and urge themselves upon the rocks around Land's End, *the howls of the spirit are louder than the roaring of the winds.* When calms rest upon the ocean, and the waves can scarcely form upon the resting waters, *low wailings creep along the coast. These are the wailings of this wandering soul.* When midnight is on the Moor or on the mountains, and the night winds whistle amidst the rugged cairns, *the shrieks of* Tregeagle are distinctly heard. We know that he is *pursued by the demon dogs*, and that till day-break he must fly with all speed before them. The voice of Tregeagle is everywhere, and yet he is unseen by human eye. Every reader will at once perceive that Tregeagle *belongs to the mythologies of the oldest nations*, and that *the traditions of this wandering spirit* in Cornwall, *which centre upon* ONE TYRANNICAL MAGISTRATE, *are but the appropriation of stories which belong to every age and country.*"

Here we have clearly a combination of the doings of the Teutonic spectre huntsman, Odin, and of his prototypes the Aryan storm gods, Indra and Rhudra, and their attendant Maruts and the Rhibus; the wailings of the homeless souls of the Irish and other legends; the interminable toil of the Wandering Jew; and the more modern tradition of the hard-hearted lord of the soil, whose deeds have rendered his name odious to the commonalty. The latter worthy modern tradition asserts, as in the case of the Ashton "Black Knight," to have been a relatively recent *bonâ fide* "tyrannical magistrate," and a "rapacious and unscrupulous landlord," and "one of the Tregeagles who once owned Trevorder near Bodmin." At his death the fiends were anxious to get immediate possession of the soul of this "gigantic sinner;" but the hardened murderer, terrified at his fate, "gave to the priesthood wealth, that they might fight with them, and save his soul from eternal fire." On one occasion it is said that his wandering spirit actually gave evidence in a court of justice, when the fiends in vain endeavoured to carry him off. The power of the priesthood prevailed, but only with the condition attached that the wretched sinner should undertake "some task difficult beyond the power of human nature, which might be extended far into eternity," with the view that the power of repentance might gradually exert its

ameliorating influence. His only hope for ultimate salvation was perpetual toil. The demons could not molest him so long as he continued his labour.

The first labour to which he was subjected was the emptying of Dosmery Pool, a mountain lake, some miles in circumference. This, in itself no slight task, was believed to be rendered more difficult from the supposed fact that the said pool was bottomless, inasmuch as tradition asserted that "once on a time" a thorn bush which had been sunk near its centre had re-appeared in Falmouth harbour. One churchman, it is said, nevertheless thought the plan not sufficiently hopeless. He therefore suggested that the only lading or baling utensil employed by the miserable sinner should be a limpet shell with a sufficiently large hole in it to seriously augment the necessary labour. The demon kept his eye on Tregeagle, and endeavoured to divert his attention from his toil, in order that he might lay hold of him. But although he *raised many tempests*, still the doomed one continued to labour. On one occasion, however, the fiends were nearly "too many" for the eternal toiler. Mr. Hunt's description of this terrible struggle is so strikingly suggestive of one of the myths to which I have referred its origin, that I give it entire. He says:—

"Nature was at war with herself, the elements had lost their balance, and there was a terrific struggle to recover it. Lightnings flashed and coiled like fiery snakes around the rocks of Roughtor. Fire-balls fell on the desert moors and hissed in the accursed lake. Thunders pealed through the heavens, and echoed from hill to hill; an earthquake shook the solid earth, and terror was on all living. The winds rose and raged with a fury which was irresistible, and hail beat so mercilessly on all things that it spread death around. Long did Tregeagle stand the 'pelting of the pitiless storm,' but at length he yielded to its force and fled. The demons in crowds were at his heels. He doubled, however, on his pursuers and returned to the lake; but so rapid were they that he could not rest the required moment to dip his shell in the now seething waters. Three times he fled round the lake, and the evil ones pursued him. Then feeling that there was no safety for him near Dosmery Pool, he sprang swifter than the wind across it, shrieking with agony, and thus—since the devils cannot cross water, and were obliged to go round the lake—he gained on them and fled over the moor. Away, away went Tregeagle, faster and faster, the dark spirits pursuing, and they had nearly overtaken him, when he saw Roach Rock and its chapel

before him. He rushed up the rocks, with giant power clambered to the eastern window, and dashed his head through it, thus securing the shelter of its sanctity. The defeated demons retired, and long and loud were their wild wailings in the air. The inhabitants of the moors and of the neighbouring towns slept not a wink that night."

This "wild hunt" is, in some respects, suggestive of Tam O'Shanter's narrow escape from the devil and the witches at Kirk Alloway.

In his "Address to the Deil," Burns associates both the devil and witches with stormy weather. He says, of the former :—

> Whyles raging like a roaring lion,
> For prey a' holes an' corners tryin ;
> Whyles on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin' ;
> Tirlin the kirks.

And again :—

> Let warlocks grim, and wither'd hags,
> Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags,
> They skim the moors an' dizzy crags,
> Wi' wicked speed.

But this is rather corroborative than otherwise of the hypothesis of their common origin. I have previously shown that witches were descended from the Aryan storm gods or their attendants. Shakspere appears to have been fully cognisant of their elemental origin, or, in other words, of their supposed power over "the elements," for he makes Macbeth, in his extremity, exclaim :—

> I conjure you, by that which you profess
> (Howe'er you came to know it), answer me :
> Though you untie the winds, and let them fight
> Against the churches : though the yesty waves
> Confound and swallow navigation up ;
> Though bladed corn be lodg'd, and trees torn down ;
> Though castles topple on their warders' heads ;
> Though palaces and pyramids do slope
> Their heads to their foundations ; tho' the treasure
> Of nature's germins tumble altogether,
> Even till destruction sicken, answer me
> To what I ask you.

The tradition that Dosmery Pool was bottomless, reminds me of a similar presumed phenomenon in the neighbourhood of Preston, which I have often heard referred to in my youth with implicit faith. It was confidently asserted that a large pit near the footpath leading from Moor Park to Cadley Mill was of the bottomless class. Doubtless it was, at that time, a very deep pit, though I believe now it is nearly if not entirely dry in the summer season. There was likewise

a pit on Preston Moor which was supposed to be bottomless. A similar belief once obtained respecting the "Stone Delph," from which the material was quarried for the tower of the Parish Church, Preston, taken down in 1814. I can yet well remember being convinced of the absurdity of this legend by an older companion, a good swimmer and diver, bringing up some mud and a stone from the bottom. The stone delph referred to is situated in the present bed of the Ribble, at the foot of the steep brow in Avenham Park. The sinking of water into the caverns of limestone rocks, as in Derbyshire, and at Malham Cove, in Yorkshire, and other places, may have originated the notion of "bottomless pits;" but I am inclined to think that demonology has, likewise, had something to do with these legends.

The mother of the mythic monster Grendel, in the ancient Anglo-Saxon poem, Beowulf, lived in a pool or mere on which fire floated at night, and the depth of which was so great that the wisest living person knew not its bottom. This mere is supposed to be the sheet of water from which Hart-le-pool, in the county of Durham, takes its name.

Tregeagle was next employed on the shore near Padstow, to make "trusses of sand and ropes of sand with which to bind them." Of course, each recurring tide swept away the result of his toil, and, according to the tradition, "the ravings of the baffled soul were louder than the roarings of the winter tempest." He was afterwards removed, by the power of the priesthood, to the estury of the Loo, and ordered to carry sand across to Porthleven. A fiend maliciously tripped him up, and the contents of his huge sack, it is said, furnished the material of the sandbank which forms the bar that destroyed the harbour of Ella's Town. Yet we learn that "the sea was raging with the irritation of a passing storm" at the time of the mishap, which clearly indicates the origin of the legend. Tregeagle's last location was at the Land's End, where Mr. Hunt says "he would find no harbour to destroy and few people to terrify. His task was to sweep the sands from Porthcurnow Cove round the headland called Tol-Peden-Penwith, into Nanjisal Cove. Those who know that rugged headland, with its cubical masses of granite, piled in Titanic grandeur one upon another, will appreciate the task; and when to all the difficulties are added the strong sweep of the Atlantic current,—that portion of the Gulf Stream which washes our southern shores,—it will be evident that the melancholy spirit has, indeed, a task which must endure to the world's end. Even until to-day is

Tregeagle labouring at his task. In calms his wailing is heard; and those sounds which some call the 'soughing of the wind,' are known to be the moanings of Tregeagle; while the coming storms are predicted by the fearful roarings of this condemned mortal."

It is very certain that we have here a singularly curious variation of the popular legend of the "Wandering Jew," and the myth of the "spectre huntsman," or the "furious host." The yelping hounds of the latter are not wanting to complete the picture, for Mr. Hunt tells us that "the tradition of the Midnight Hunter and his headless hounds, *always, in Cornwall, associated with Tregeagle*, prevails everywhere. The Abbot's Way, on Dartmoor, an ancient road which extends into Cornwall, is said to be the favourite coursing ground of the 'wish or whisked hounds of Dartmoor,' called also the 'yell hounds.' The valley of the Dewerstone is also the place of their midnight meetings. Once I was told at Jump, that Sir Francis Drake drove a hearse into Plymouth at night with headless horses, and that he was followed by a pack of 'yelling hounds' without heads. If dogs hear the cry of the wish hounds they all die."

The performance attributed to Sir Francis Drake is unquestionably a relatively modernised version of the mythical black coach story previously referred to as one form of the furious host legend. The effect of the cry of the wish hounds on the canine race in Cornwall is similar to that attributed to their compeers in Lancashire, only the death resultant is always that of a human being in the northern locality.

Mr. Hunt seems to doubt Mr. Kemble's etymology of the term "wish," when he says:—"In Devonshire, to this day, all magical or supernatural dealings go under the common name of wishtness. Can this have any reference to Woden's name 'Wyse?'" Mr. Hunt, however, acknowledges that "Mr. Kemble's idea is supported by the fact that 'there are *Wishanger* (Wisehanger, or Woden's Meadow,) one about four miles south-west of Wanborough, in Surrey, and another near Gloucester.'" He acknowledges, likewise, on the authority of Jabez Allies, that there is a *Wishmoor*, which may have such an origin, in Ledstone, Delamere, Worcestershire. Mr. Hunt thinks that the word "wish" is intimately "connected with the west country word 'whist,' meaning more than ordinary melancholy, a sorrow which has something weird about it." Polwhele, in his "Wishful Swain of Devon," says it is "an expression used by the vulgar to express local melancholy;" and he adds,—"There is something sublime in this impersonation of *wishness*." It is not at all improbable that both these etymologies point to a common origin. The deeds of the spectre

huntsman and the furious host, a "cavalcade of the dead," are not calculated to impress on the human imagination anything repugnant to the "melancholy sorrow with something weird surrounding it," to which Mr. Hunt refers.

This supposed sympathy of "the elements" with human joy, or sorrow, or suffering, is evidently a very ancient superstition. In Lancashire we have yet the saying—

> Happy is the bride that the sun shines on;
> Happy is the corpse that the rain rains on.

Shakspere has beautifully illustrated this presumed sensitiveness, not only of "the elements," but of animated nature, to the perpetration of deeds of darkness and blood by perverted humanity, in the following lines, which he places in the mouth of Lennox, on the morning after the murder of Duncan, by his host, Macbeth:—

> The night has been unruly; where we lay,
> Our chimneys were blown down; and, as they say,
> Lamentings heard i'the air; strange screams of death;
> And prophesying, with accents terrible,
> Of dire combustion and confused events,
> New hatched to the woeful time. The obscure bird
> Clamoured the live-long night; some say the earth
> Was feverous, and did shake.

The sentiment is still further illustrated, with singular felicity, in the dialogue which follows, between Rosse and an old man:—

> *Old Man.* Three score and ten I can remember well;
> Within the volume of which time I have seen
> Hours dreadful and things strange; but this sore night
> Hath trifled former knowings.
> *Rosse.* Ah! good father,
> Thou see'st the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
> Threaten his bloody stage. By the clock 'tis day,
> And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.
> Is it night's predominance, or the day's shame,
> That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
> When living light should kiss it?
> *Old Man.* 'Tis unnatural,
> Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
> A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
> Was, by a mousing owl, hawked at and killed.
> *Rosse.* And Duncan's horses, (a thing most strange and certain),
> Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
> Turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
> Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
> War with mankind.
> *Old Man.* 'Tis said, they eat each other!
> *Rosse.* They did so; to the amazement of mine eyes,
> That looked upon't.

The Ashton "Black Knight" traditions, doubtless, to some extent, influenced the colouring of Bamford's poem, "The Wild Rider." Mr. Hunt quotes from a somewhat similar modern ballad, entitled "*Tregeagle or Dozmare Poole; an Anciente Cornish Legend*," by John Penwarne, in which, however, he states the author has taken considerable liberties with the tradition. Tregeagle is transformed into a kind of Faust, and the black hunter, whose "dread voyce they hearde in wynde," is no other than the arch-fiend himself.

> They heard hys curste hell houndes runn yelping behynde,
> And hys steede loude on the eare!

Although, in compliance with his contract with the demon, "the rede bolte of vengeaunce shot forth wyth a glare, and strooke him a corpse to the grounde,"

> Stylle as the traveller pursues hys lone waye
> In horroure at nighte o'er the waste,
> He hears Syr Tregeagle with shrieks rushe awaye,
> He hears the Black Hunter pursuing his preye,
> And shrynkes at his bugle's dread blaste.

Here we find Odin (the spectre huntsman), by successive degrees, transformed into Sir Tregeagle, with a black knight attendant. The pair does not inaptly represent the Sir Ashton, of Bamford's poem, and the "Black Lad" of the Ashton Legend. The term "Th' Owd Lad" is a common expression in several parts of Lancashire, and means literally "Old Nick," or the devil.*

Both knights were baffled in affairs of the heart, and the doom of the one resembles that of the other. Bamford concludes his poem with the following stanzas:—

> But strangest of all, on that woe-wedding night,
> A black horse was stabled where erst stood the white;
> The grooms, when they found him, in terror quick fled,
> His breath was hot smoke, and his eyes burning red;
> He beat down a strong wall of mortar and crag,
> He tore his oak stall as a dog would a rag,
> And no one durst put forth a hand near that steed
> Till a priest had read Ave, and pater, and creed.

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* Mr. Roby's version of the tradition states that a half-witted lad meet Sir Ralph Ashton, when driving a cow towards the Knight's residence. The boy, who was unacquainted with his superior, in answer to qustions, said his father was dead, and he was driving the cow to Sir Ralph's as the heriot due under the circumstance. He further asked if the stranger did not think that, on Sir Ralph's death, the devil, his master, would demand his soul as heriot. The question so astonished the Knight that he sent the cow back to the poor widow. Dr. Hibbert Ware mentions a similar tradition, but the Knight's name is not Ralph, but Robert Ashton..

And then he came forth, the strange beautiful thing,
With speed that could lead a wild eagle on wing;
And raven had never spread plume on the air
Whose lustrous darkness with his might compare.
He bore the young Ashton—none else could him ride—
O'er flood and o'er fell, and o'er quarry pit wide;
The housewife, she blest her, and held fast her child,
And the men swore both horse and his rider were wild.

And then when the knight to the hunting field came,
He rode as he sought rather death than his game.
He halloo'd through woods where he wandered of yore,
But the lost Lady Mary he never saw more!
And no one durst ride in the track where he led,
So fearful his leaps, and so madly he sped;
And in his wild phrenzy he gallop'd one day
Down the church steps at Rochdale, and up the same way.

The practice of giving a local name and local significance to this tradition and its hero has been previously shown to be by no means unusual. At Fontainebleau Odin is transformed into Hugh Capet; the ancient British king, Hegla, rode at the head of the hunt on the banks of the Wye, in the reign of Henry II.; King Arthur, in Normandy, Scotland, and other places, is elevated to the post of honour; in Sleswig it is the Duke Abel; and at Danzig it is Theordoric the Great. Wordsworth, in the lines quoted at the head of this chapter, designates the personage who hunts with Gabriel's hounds as an "impious lord."

The mythical connection between unwearied but unwilling toil and arrogance and presumption is referred to by the Rev. G. W. Cox in the following terms:—"The myth of Ixîôn exhibits the sun as bound to the four spoked wheel which is whirled round everlastingly in the sky.* In that of Sisyphos we see the same being condemned to the daily toil of heaving a stone to the summit of a hill from which it immediately rolls down. This idea of tasks unwillingly done, or of natural operations as accomplished by means of punishment, is found also in the myth of Atlas, a name which like that of Tantalos denotes endurance and suffering, and so passes into the notion of arrogance and presumption." In a note he adds,—"The Hellenic Atlas is simply the Vedic Skambha."

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* "This wheel reappears in the Gaelic story of the Widow and her Daughters, Campbell, ii. 265, and in Grimm's German tale of the Iron Stove. The treasure house of Ixîôn, which none may enter without being either destroyed like Hesioneus or betrayed by marks of gold or blood, reappears in a vast number of popular stories, and is the foundation of the story of Bluebeard."

The story of the "spectre huntsman," under various modifications, is found in different parts of the country. They seem invariably to suggest the common origin to which I have referred, however much it may be obscured by relatively modern additions or poetic embelishments.

CHAPTER X.

GIANTS, MYTHICAL AND OTHERWISE.

His other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size;
Titanian, or Earth-born, that warr'd on Jove,
Briareos or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea beast
Leviathan, which God of all His works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream.
Milton.

Amongst the traditionary beings which linger yet in the legends of nearly every race or tribe, few are more universal than those relating to giants or men of colossal size and superhuman power. Geoffrey of Monmouth gravely informs us that, before the arrival of his legendary Trojan, Brutus, Britain was "called Albion, and was inhabited by none but a few giants." According to the same authority, Ireland was originally peopled by a similar race of monsters. He asserts that the magician Merlin transported the materials for the building of Stonehenge from the Irish mountain Killaraus, to Salisbury Plain. Merlin assured Uther Pendragon that the stones were "mystical, and of a medical virtue," and that "the giants of old brought them from the furthest coasts of Africa, and placed them in Ireland while they inhabited that country."

The ancient Britons believed Stonehenge to have been built by giants, hence its name, in their language, *Choir-gaur*, which signifies the "Giant's Dance."

The earliest reliable notice of the British Islands is, however, to be found in the work "De Mundo," section three, attributed to Aristotle (B.C. 340). The writer says:—"Beyond the Pillars of Hercules is the ocean which flows round the earth. In it are two very large islands, called Britiannic; these are Albion and Ierne."

The Ramayana, which is the next Sanscrit work in point of age to the Vedas, gives a singular account of the conquest of Ceylon, in which some mythic giants and monsters appear together with monkey

warriors. Rama, by the aid of celestial weapons, conquered demons. He obtained his wife, Sita, by snapping the bow of her gigantic father. The said bow was conveyed from place to place by an eight-wheeled carriage, drawn by eight hundred men! His wife having been carried off through the sky by the demon monarch of Ceylon, "at whose name heaven's armies flee," Rama entered into an alliance with Sugriva, king of the monkeys, whose general, Hanuman, at the head of his monkey army, aided Rama in the conquest of his enemy's territory. The demon king was slain, and Sita recovered. The latter successfully underwent the ordeal of walking through blazing fire, in order to demonstrate her purity.

The confusion which existed in ancient times respecting wild men, monsters, and some kind of gigantic ape or monkey, has had some little light thrown upon it by the recent experiences of M. Du Chaillu in Equatorial Africa. In his "Journey to Ashango-land," he says:—

"After reconsidering the whole subject, I am compelled also to state that I think it highly probable that gorillas, and not chimpanzees, as I was formerly inclined to think, were the animals seen and captured by the Carthagenians under Hanno, as related in the 'Periplus.' Many circumstances combine in favour of this conclusion. One of the results of my late journey has been to prove that gorillas are nowhere more common than on the tract of land between the bend of the Fernand Vaz and the seashore; and, as this land is chiefly of alluvial formation, and the bed of the river constantly shifting, it is extremely probable that there were islands here in the time of Hanno. The southerly part of the land is rather hilly, and, even if it were not then an island, the Carthagenians, in rambling a short distance from the beach, would see a broad water (the Fernand Vaz) beyond them, and would conclude that the land was an island. . . The passage in the 'Periplus,' which I mentioned in 'Equatorial Africa,' is to the following effect:—'On the third day after sailing from thence, passing the streams of fire, we came to a bay called the Horn of the South. In the recess was an island like the first, having a lake, and in this there was another island full of wild men. But much the greater part of them were women with hairy bodies, whom the interpreters called gorillas. . . . But, pursuing them, we were not able to take the men; they all escaped from us by their great agility, being *cremnobates* (that is to say, climbing precipitous rocks and trees), and defending themselves by throwing stones at us. We took three women, who bit and tore those who caught them, and were unwilling to follow. We were obliged, therefore, to kill them,

and took their skins off, which skins were brought to Carthage, for we did not navigate further, provisions becoming scarce.'" Du Chaillu adds his opinion that "the hairy men and women met with were males and females of the *Trolodytes gorilla*. Even the name 'gorilla,' given to the animal in the 'Periplus,' is not very greatly different from its native name at the present day, 'ngina' or 'ngilla,' especially in the indistinct way in which it is sometimes pronounced."

Mr. Robert Hunt seems to regard the giants of "old Cornwall" as something generically distinct from those depicted in Mr. Dasent's translation of Asbjörnsen and Moe's collection of "Norse Tales." He says:—

"May we venture to believe that the Cornish giant is a true Celt, or may he not belong to an earlier race? He was fond of home, and we have no record of his ever having passed beyond the wilds of Dartmoor. The giants of Lancashire, and Cheshire, and Shropshire have a family likeness, and are no doubt closely related; but if they are cousins to the Cornish giants, they are cousins far removed."

So far from entertaining a doubt as to the common origin of these mythical monsters, on account of the diversity of local costume in which they are presented, I rather feel disposed to express astonishment at the vast amount of similarity they yet retain, after being subjected for centuries to so many diverse influences. The Titans and the Cyclops, of the polished Greeks, some of whom are said to have covered nine acres of land when laid on the earth; the Goëmagot, who succumbed in the famous wrestling match to the Trojan chief Corineus, on the cliff at Plymouth, and who, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, was twelve cubits high, and tore up huge oak trees as if they were hazel wands; that prince of pedestrians, Bolster, immortalised by the pencil and burin of George Cruickshank, who took his six miles at a stride, over a Cornish valley, without discomfort; the trolls and giants of the Norse, who, like their Greek cousins, warred with the ascendant gods; the ogres and huge club-wielding monsters of our nursery days, that in Lancashire, as in other parts of England (Cornwall included), yielded to the prowess of the redoubtable "Jack-the-Giant-Killer," or "Jack the Tinkeard," present too many corresponding family features and mental and physical coincidences to permit a serious doubt of their common parentage. The Teutonic giants of the German tales collected by the brothers Grimm, bear unmistakable relationship both to those of Cornwall and the north of England. Indeed, "Gogmagog," the very name of the Shropshire colossus who was located in the ruins of the Roman city

Uriconium, is preserved in that of the Cornish giant wrestler above referred to. There are Gog-Magog hills, too, near Cambridge; and the Corporation of London yet retains the huge wooden images which represent this mythic monster split into two, and converted into the giant warders of the ancient city—the well-known Gog and Magog. I have seen at Norwich two huge wooden dolls, which, if they do not actually represent the said Gog and Magog, are evidently intended as portraits of some very near relatives of those ponderous mis-shapen relics of the past.

Much useless discussion has been devoted to the attempt to show that mankind, or at least some portion thereof, in the "pre-historic time," was of Cyclopean or gigantic stature. All known evidence of a reliable character, however, condemns this hypothesis as untenable. The power of ignorance and rumour to magnify small facts into monstrous fictions is aptly illustrated by the story of the famous three black crows. The deeds of a man of uncommon stature, or extraordinary strength, would furnish, under certain circumstances, a sufficient modicum of truth to lay the foundation of a most extravagant myth. We have a modern illustration of the proneness of ignorant or superstitious persons to hyperbole in matters of this kind, in the statements of early voyagers anent the aborigines of Patagonia. Our early school geographies informed us that this then relatively unknown portion of South America was peopled by a race of giants. Indeed, I think it was even intimated that these colossi were most probably the *bona fide* descendants of the supposed mythical monsters of the days of old. Some Spanish officers, in 1785, measured several of these Patagonian giants, and they reported that the greatest monster of the lot only reached seven feet one inch and a quarter! I can never remember England being without two or three exhibited giants, who would look with contempt upon such pretensions to the honours of the caravan, to say nothing of the "reception room" of such "gentlemanly freaks of nature" as Chang, the Chinese Anak, Mons. Brice, or Captain Bates, with his colossal wife, *née* Miss Swan. But Captain Wallis informs us that, on his carefully measuring several of these Patagonian prodigies, he found that the stature of the greater part of them ranged between five feet ten inches and six feet! The well-known regiment of grenadiers raised by Frederick William the First, of Prussia, whould have completely dwarfed these once celebrated Patagonian Titans. One of them, a Swede, measured eight feet six inches. "O'Brien, the Irish giant," who died in 1783, was eight feet four inches in height. His real name was Byrne. His

skeleton is preserved in the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, London. Chang, at nineteen years of age, was said to be seven feet nine and a half inches in height. He stated that a deceased sister was eight inches taller than himself! The proneness to exaggeration or hyperbole to which I have referred was shared in even by such men as Julius Cæsar and Tacitus; or, at the least, they dealt largely in the article at second-hand. They believed and recorded the then vulgar notion that the German "barbarians," our own ancestors, were a race of gigantic men.

Indeed the belief in giants and other monsters was almost universal amongst the more educated section of the Roman people. Pliny speaks of the existence of men in India whose height exceeded five cubits. He assures his readers, on the most unimpeachable authority, that "they are never known to spit, are not troubled with pain in the head or teeth, or grief of the eyes, and seldom or never complain of any soreness in any other parts of the body, so hardy are they, and of so strong a constitution, through the moderate heat of the sun." He likewise talks of a people who, having no heads, stand on their necks. These monsters were said to carry their eyes in their shoulders. He describes the Choromandæ as a savage people, without a distinct speech. Their bodies were rough and hairy. They gnashed their teeth and made a hideous noise. Their eyes were red, and their teeth of the canine order. This same India, according to Pliny, possessed a great variety of other monstrosities, such as men without noses, men with feet a cubit long, while those of their wives were so small that they were called "sparrow-footed."

That such stories were ordinarily accepted as true, even in Shakspere's days, is attested by the fact that the great poet and dramatist places in the mouth of Othello, in his eloquent defence before the senate of Venice, when explaining his method of courtship, the following words:—

> Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,
> Of moving accidents, by flood and field;
> Of hair-breadth scapes i'th imminent deadly breach;
> Of being taken by the insolent foe
> And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence
> And portance in my travel's history;
> Wherein of antres vast, and deserts idle,
> Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,
> It was my hint to speak, such was the process;
> And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
> The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
> Do grow beneath their shoulders.

Again, in the Tempest, after the appearance of Prospero's magic repast, Sebastian says,—

> Now I will believe
> That there are unicorns; that in Arabia
> There is one tree, the Phœnix' throne; one phœnix
> At this hour reigning there.

And Gonzala adds,—

> When we were boys,
> Who would believe that there were mountaineers
> Dew-lapp'd like bulls, whose throats had hanging at them
> Wallets of flesh? or that there were such men,
> Whose heads stood in their breasts.

The Amorites, the most important tribe of the aborigines of Palestine, are described in the Jewish Rabbinical writings as of enormous stature. Amos indeed, speaks of them, figuratively, as being as high as cedars and as strong as oaks. It is stated in Deuteronomy that the iron bed of Og, King of Bashan, was nine cubits long and four in breadth. This bed, however, by some, is believed to have been really a kind of divan. The Rabbinical writers were not, however, content with even a literal interpretation of these passages. In the *Jalkut Shimoni* we are told that Moses informed Azräel, the Angel of Death, that the dimensions of Og and Sihon were so great that they escaped drowning at the great Deluge, the water of which reached no higher than their ancles! According to the *Sevachir*, Og placed his feet on the fountains of the Great Deep, and, by putting his hand on the windows of Heaven, he stopped the Deluge! On the water being made so hot, however, that the monster's lower extremities became parboiled, he was compelled to desist. He nevertheless mounted the ark, and survived the great catastrophe. He was said to consume daily one thousand oxen, one thousand head of game, and one thousand measures of wine. He was a famous hand at uplifting mountains and other objects of similarly trifling magnitude! He met with a mishap, however, whilst conveying a rock "three miles in extent," with which he proposed to annihilate the Israelitish army at one blow! We are further informed that Joshua, who was ten ells high, perceiving that the rock was crumbling to pieces around the giant's shoulders, struck him on the ancle with an axe ten ells in length, and thus lamed him for life. Sihon was so powerful that no creature on earth could withstand him. It seems, however, that he derived his strength not altogether from his immense physique, but from a demon with which he was connected, inasmuch as the Israelites speedily vanquished both him and his

gigantic Amorite followers, after the said demon had been effectually confined in chains. The Amorites may have been men of large stature in comparison with the surrounding tribes. This is by no means improbable. Two recent travellers, Mr. Porter and the Rev. Cyril Graham, testify to the Cyclopian character of the remains of some of the ancient cities of Bashan, which they succeeded in discovering, after infinite toil and fatigue, the former in 1853 and the latter in 1857. Some of the houses are described as being built of immense masses of squared stones of the neighbouring basalt rock, without mortar or other cement, with an enormous basaltic "flag" for the roof, and a similar one for a door or gateway. Some of the latter Mr. Graham found still in position, and capable of being turned on the stone pivots which supplied the place of hinges.

Mr. Gladstone, in his "Juventus Mundi," contends that the "Cyclops, a godless race," are the children of Poseidon, and that Poseidon (the Greek Neptune) was the chief god of the Phœnicians. He adds, "Syria was inhabited by Canaanites; and it has been observed that the names given in Scripture to that race indicate great stature and physical force, which became the basis of a tradition that they were a race of giants. To the Greek mind this would naturally convey that they were the children of Poseidon, as the Phœnician god."

The ruins at Baalbec, and the sites of other ancient Phœnician cities, present numerous specimens of colossal masonry, of most extraordinary dimensions. In a wall at Baalbec three large blocks of stone are described as still *in situ*, at the height of twenty feet from the ground, which measure each twelve feet in width, twelve feet in depth, and sixty feet in length. Mr. John D. Baldwin, in his "Prehistoric Nations," contends that the ancient Phœnicians were of Cushite of Hamite origin. Speaking of their stupendous architectural remains, he says:—

"The Cushite origin of these cities is so plain that those most influenced by the strange monomania which transforms the Phœnicians into Semites now admit that the Cushites were the first civilizers in Phœnicia. These old builders, whose sculpture produced such astonishing effects in coarse rock, resorted to wood and metal for the finish and ornamentation of their work. The stone they used was not Parian marble, therefore they covered it with ornament of another material, and 'what remains of their monuments is not the monument itself, but the gross support that served to bear the whole system of decoration under which the stone was concealed.'"

In relatively recent times, India appears to have been regarded as

especially the land of giants, marvels, and enchantments. Honest old Sir John Mandeville, in his quaint, credulous, innocent way, tells us that there are, in one of the Indian islands, "folks of great stature, as giants, and they be hideous to look upon, and they have but one eye, and that is in the middle of the front, and they eat nothing but raw flesh and raw fish." He further adds that they were clothed in the skins of beasts, they drank milk, preferred man's flesh to all other food, and they had no houses to live in. In another Indian island, Sir John tells us he was informed that giants dwelt "of great stature—some fifty cubits long;" but he adds, with commendable caution, "I saw none of these, for I had no lust to go to those partes, because no man cometh neither into that Isle nor into the other, but he is devoured anon. Men say that many times the giants take men into the sea out of their ships and bring them to land, two in one hand and two in another, eating them going, all raw and all quick."

The extravagance manifested in these giant legends may have arisen from two distinct sources, besides the one to which I have alluded. In the first place *giant* did not originally mean bulk or extraordinary height. The Hebrew word *nephilim*, used in the Bible, according to Dr. Derham, is sometimes employed to signify "*violent* men," and it is translated by a word carrying such a meaning by several ancient writers. He considers that "monsters of rapine and wickedness" are referred to rather than giants in stature. And it is perfectly true that vice and violence are almost always characteristic of these legendary huge-limbed gentry; while the conqueror, who represents the better morals of the age of the myths, is generally of the dimensions of ordinary humanity.

The discovery of certain fossil bones of colossal size for a time seemed to countenance the belief in the physical existence of this mythic race. Buffon, indeed, describes and figures large bones as the remains of giants, which are now well known to pertain to a species of extinct fossil elephant.

In a letter from Dr. Mather to Dr. Woodward, published in the Royal Society's Transactions, reference is made to a discovery, at Albany, in New England, in 1705, of enormous bones and teeth. The doctor calls them the bones of a giant, and refers to them as corroborative of the statement in Genesis, c. 6, v. 4. The bones in question, however, turned out to belong to the great American fossil pachyderm, the *Mastadon giganteus*. There is a tradition amongst the red Indians, that a race of men, relatively large in stature, existed contemporaneously with these animals, and that both were destroyed

by the Great Spirit with thunderbolts. One account says,—that "as a troop of these terrible quadrupeds were destroying the deer, the bisons, and the other animals created for the use of the Indians, the "Great Man," slew them all with his thunder, except the Big Bull, who, nothing daunted, presented his enormous forehead to the bolts, and shook them off as they fell, till, being at last wounded in the side, he fled towards the great lakes, where he is to this day."

Dr. Hitchcock, in one of his geological works, informs us that "Felix Plater, Professor of Anatomy at Basle, referred the bones of an elephant, found at Lucerne, to a giant at least nineteen feet high, and, in England, similar bones were regarded as those of the fallen angels!"

The discovery of remains of a fossil elephant beneath the cliff at Plymouth was not very long ago held by some to furnish demonstrative evidence not only of the strictly historical character of Geoffrey of Monmouth's idle romance respecting the landing of Brute and his Trojans in England, but of the precise locality where the mythic champion wrestler, Corineus, hurled the equally mythic giant, Gog-magog, from the cliff into the sea!*

At Coggeshall, in Essex, similar remains have been found. One of the earliest notices of these interesting discoveries is by old Norden, who says that at Coggeshall "ther were to be seene 2 teeth of a monstrous man or gyant of so great magnitude and weight as 100 of anie men's teeth in this age cannot countervayle one of them."

White Watson alludes to the discovery, last century, of the skull of a fossil elephant, at Wirksworth, in Derbyshire, which was commonly believed at the time to be the brain-pan of an enormous giant.

In the second place, it does not appear a difficult matter to recognise in these giant legends, one form in which the memory of the dethronement of the gods of the various Aryan myths has been preserved. In fact, the very feats performed by the giants in Cornwall, such as the hurling of huge rocks, and striding across valleys, are, as I have previously shown, attributed in Lancashire and the north of England to the devil. A tradition yet exists that the

* Since the above was written, I have cut from a newspaper the following astounding paragraph:—"A story is told of a large cave just discovered near St. Josephs, Mo., in which was a human skeleton, thirty-eight feet six inches long, with a head six feet in circumference. Where is Barnum?" I suspect, however, that even Barnum would fancy this story is a little "too good to be true." The mendacious Falstaff regretted that "the world was given to lying," and yet his mythical one hour's conflict (by Shrewsbury clock) with the valiant Hotspur, was a rational hoax in comparison to the above.

Roman highways, which cross each other not far from Fulwood Barracks, near Preston, extended from the North Sea to the South Sea, and from the East Sea to the West Sea, and that the devil made them himself in one night. Indeed in mythical and traditionary lore, giants and devils are frequently convertible personages.

Mr. A. Russel Wallace, in his "Malay Archipelago," tells us that the present inhabitants of the island of Java, "who now only build rude houses of bamboo and thatch," look upon the ruins of the colossal edifices, the remarkable examples of ancient sculpture, and other evidences of the extinct civilization amidst which they dwell, "with ignorant amazement," and regard them as "the undoubted productions of giants or of demons." The mythology of the Southern Aryans presents a similar confusion; their tribe of demons, the Râkshasas or Atrins (devourers), Kelly regards as the "earliest originals of the giants and ogres of our nursery tales. They can take any form at will, but their natural one is that of a huge mis-shapen giant 'like a cloud,' with hair and beard of the colour of red lightning. They go about open-mouthed, gnashing their monstrous teeth and snuffing after human flesh. Their strength waxes most terrible in twilight, and they know how to increase its effect by all sorts of magic. They carry off their human prey through the air, tear open the living bodies, and with their faces plunged amongst the entrails they suck up the warm blood as it gushes from the heart. After they have gorged themselves they dance merrily." These Râkshasas, certainly look very like the originals of the monsters described by Sir John Mandeville.

The story of the Titans, overthrown by Zeus, and cast into Tartarûs, is the Hellenic form of this giant myth, which Milton has imitated in his Paradise Lost, where Satan and his host, formerly angels and archangels, are hurled from heaven into the bottomless pit. Milton's devils are, in fact, veritable giants. Speaking of Satan, the poet describes him as

> In bulk as huge
> As whom the fables name of monstrous size;
> Titanian or Earth-born, that warr'd on Jove,
> Briareos or Typhon, whom the den
> By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea beast
> Leviathan, which God of all His works
> Created hugest that swim the ocean stream.

Again, speaking of his ponderous weapon, he says,—

> His spear, to equal which the tallest pine
> Hewn on Norwegian hills to be the mast
> Of some great admiral, were but a wand.

The "mission" of these Pandemonium giants is precisely analagous to that of the rest of the fraternity. Satan says to Beelzebub,—

> Of this be sure,
> To do ought good never will be our task,
> But ever to do ill our sole delight,
> As being the contrary to His high will
> Whom we resist. If then His providence
> Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
> Our labour must be to pervert that end,
> And out of good still to find means of evil.

The trolls and giants of the Norse traditions are evidently but other forms of the common myth, notwithstanding the metamorphoses which they, in some respects, seem to have undergone. Dasent points out some kinder qualities which the giants occasionally exhibit. He says:—"One sympathises, too, with them, and almost pities them as the representatives of a simple primitive race, whose day is past and gone, but who still possessed something of the innocence and virtue of ancient times, together with a stock of old experience, which, however useful it might be as an example to others, was quite useless to help themselves." Yet he regards them as the embodiment of "sheer brute force," which yields to the "slight and lissom foe" representing virtue and reason. The "upstart Æsir gods," to whom they are opposed, are described as endowed with "that diviner wrath which, though burning hot, was still under the control of reason." The trolls, on the contrary, are subject to wild paroxysms of merely brutal animal rage, which discloses their true parentage. The fact that their enemies, the Æsir gods, were afterwards dethroned, and stigmatised, along with the classical deities, as cacodæmons, and became associated with the giants as evil spirits, will perhaps explain why some of the race have been endowed with attributes which do not pertain to the rest. It appears that they knew of their common destiny; that they sometimes suspended hostilities, and even intermarried; and looked forward with joint melancholy gloom to that, to them, awful day, "the twilight of the gods," when both should fall before the light of the Christian revelation.

The Venerable Bede, in describing the martyrdom of St. Alban, expressly states that the magistrate or judge "was standing at the altar, and offering sacrifice to devils," the said devils being the gods of the Romans. He afterwards informs us that, when the bishops Germanicus and Lupus were on a voyage to Britain, "on a sudden they were obstructed by the malevolence of demons, who were jealous that such men should be sent to bring back the Britons to the faith.

They raised storms and darkened the sky with clouds." Their efforts were fruitless, nevertheless, as the piety of the bishops prevailed against them. The Old Nick of the English, literally the devil, is but one form of Odin dethroned. Professor Henry Morley, in his "English Writers," says,—"Odin, under the name of Nikarr, from a root signifying stroke of violence, which appears in the Greek νίκη victory; in the Latin *necare* and Anglo-Saxon *nœcan*, to kill; and in the English Knock; having been first cut up into Nickers, has become the Old Nick of more recent times."

Dasent speaks of the trolls "as more systematically malignant than the giants, and with the term were bound up notions of sorcery and unholy power." He justly adds,—

"But mythology is a woof of many colours, in which the hues are shot and blended, so that the various races of supernatural beings are shaded off and fade away almost imperceptibly into each other; and thus, even in heathen times, it must have been hard to say exactly where the giant ended and the troll began. But when Christianity came in and heathendom fell; when the godlike race of the Æsir became evil demons instead of good genial powers, then all the objects of the old popular belief, whether Æsir, giants, or trolls, were mingled together in one superstition, as 'no canny.' They were all trolls, all malignant, and thus it is that, in these tales, the traditions about Odin and his underlings, about the frost giants, and about sorcerers and wizards, are confused and garbled; and all supernatural agency that plots man's ill is the work of *trolls*, whether the agent be the arch enemy himself, or giant, or witch, or wizard."

Mr. Hunt appears to regard some of the giant traditions of Cornwall as having direct reference to the aboriginal inhabitants of the country. There may be some truth in this, as the existence of such demi-giants as his Tom, who defeated giant Blunderbus by the skilful employment of the wheel and axle of his wagon, would seem to indicate. The wheel and axle, however, is an Aryan sun emblem, and one type of the "chark" or "fire-bringing" instrument, invented, according to the Greeks, by Prometheus. This unquestionably demonstrates its descent from the ancient solar myths. Conquered men driven to the caves and mountain fastnesses, and addicted to violence and cruelty, would soon be described figuratively by language which literally referred to older superstitions; just as we now designate sanguinary savages as monsters, fiends, and even "devils incarnate." This, no doubt, offers the most probable interpretation of the Gog-Magog story, as well as of many others of its class. Dasent says,—

"Between this outcast nomade race, which wandered from forest to forest, and from fell to fell, without a fixed place of abode, and the old natural powers and frost giants, the minds of the race which adored Odin and the Æsir soon engendered a monstrous man-eating cross-breed of supernatural beings, who fled from contact with the intruders as soon as the first great struggle was over, abhorred the light of day, and looked upon agriculture and tillage as a dangerous innovation which destroyed their hunting fields, and was destined finally to root them out from off the face of the earth."

Mackenzie informs us that the Esquimaux with whom he conversed had a tradition that the English were giants, with wings, who could kill with a glance of their eye, and swallow at a mouthful an entire beaver.

If the European emigrants who have conquered North America from the Red Indian, and nearly extirpated his race, had been as superstitious as their forefathers were some two or three thousand years ago, we should have had a similar class of mixed myths resulting from their warlike contact. Indeed, we have, notwithstanding the influence of Christianity, some faint indications that the superstitious element in this direction has not yet completely died out.

Many of these mythic giants are little more than degraded forms of the original Aryan personifications of the forces of Nature. Rivers have been deified, and so have mountains. Atlas was a giant, who held the earth on his shoulders. The one-eyed Cyclops, with the deformed Vulcan at their head, forging thunderbolts in a cave at Mount Etna, personify volcanic force. Giants were supposed to be buried alive at the base of such mountains as Etna, Stromboli, and Vesuvius, and their struggles to free themselves the cause of the earthquakes and other terrestrial convulsions to which the localities were specially subjected. The whirlpool and rock in the Straits of Messina, which cause no special alarm to modern navigators, created so much terror in the minds of ancient sailors, and made such havoc of their frail craft, that they became regarded as malicious demons, and were named Scylla and Charybdis. The noise of the furious waves, dashing upon the rocky cavernous coast, fancy likened to the howling of dogs and wolves. Hence the fable that a female monster, surrounded by troops of such animals, prowled about the neighbourhood, awaiting the opportunity of devouring mariners wrecked on the coast. The celebrated basaltic rock in the north of Ireland was called the "Giant's Causeway" simply because the early inhabitants, knowing nothing of geology, thought it a result of superhuman or demo-

niacal labour. The equally celebrated cave in Derbyshire, doubtless, received the name of the "Devil's Hole" for a similar reason. Many of Mr. Hunt's Cornish giants live in the violently upheaved masses of granite which receive the Atlantic tempests in their wildest fury. Some, indeed, having become more modernised, live in castles on the rocky mountains. Others of these myths have become entangled with the Tregeagle traditions, which, I have previously shown, embody much of the Teutonic "wild hunt" or "furious host" superstitions.

The Rev. George W. Cox, in his "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," contends that the beings spoken of as Cyclops in the Illiad and the Odessey, are personifications of distinct natural forces. The former he says "are manifestly the dazzling and scorching flashes which plough up the storm-clad heavens." In the latter the phenomenal features are of a very different character. Polyphemos is "the son of Poseidôn (Neptune) and the nymph Thoôsa; in other words he is emphatically the child of the waters, and of the waters only—the huge mists which wrap the earth in a dark cloud." The one-eyed monster, blinded by Odysseus, is the sun himself, shorn of his beams, glaring ghastly through the blackening mist. He says:—"This terrible being may be seen drawn with wonderful fidelity to the spirit of the old myth in Turner's picture of the overthrow of the troops sent by Cambyses to the shrine of the Lybian Ammon; and they who see the one-eyed monster glaring down on the devoted army, where the painter was probably utterly unconscious that he was doing more than representing the simoom of the desert, will recognise at once the unconscious accuracy with which the modern painter conveys the old Homeric conception of Polyphêmos. In this picture, as in the storms of the desert, the sun becomes the one great eye of an enormous monster, who devours every living thing that crosses his path, as Polyphêmos devoured the comrades of Odysseus. The blinding of this monster is the natural sequel when his mere brute force is pitted against the craft of his adversary. In his seeming insignificance and his despised estate, in his wayworn mien and his many sorrows, Odysseus takes the place of the Boots or Cinderella of Teutonic folk-lore; and as the giant is manifestly the enemy of the bright being whose splendours are for the time being hidden beneath a veil, so it is the representative of the sun himself who pierces out his eye; and thus Odysseus, Boots, and Jack the Giant Killer alike overcome and escape from the enemy, although they may be said to escape with the skin of their teeth."

Grimm relates a Norwegian legend, which clearly indicates that many of these gigantic monsters of the old mythologies were simply impersonations of elemental strife or powerful natural forces. Olaf, the saint and king, being anxious to build a very large church without taxing heavily his people, bargained with a giant or troll, who undertook the labour on condition that he should receive as his reward the sun and the moon, or, in default, the royal saint himself. When the immense structure was nearly completed, Olaf wandered about in sore dismay, wondering how the giant's demand could be met. Suddenly he heard a child crying in the inside of a hill or small mountain. On listening attentively, he overheard a giantess say to the child these words:—"Hush! hush! to-morrow, *Wind and Weather*, your father, will come home and bring with him the sun and the moon, or St. Olaf himself." It appears that the simply calling an evil spirit by his name was sufficient to utterly annihilate him. So Olaf marched up with a bold front to the giant, and said,—"*Wind and Weather*, you have set the spire awry!" The giant suddenly fell from the top of the edifice, and was smashed to pieces. And further, each piece was found to have become converted into a flint stone!

Giants were introduced pretty freely, especially during the earlier period of modern English literature, into allegorical works both in prose and poetry. There is a forcible illustration of this in Stephen Hawe's "Pastime of Pleasure." Prince Graunde Amour, goes forth in search of adventures. False Report, a dwarf, deceives him, but he slays a giant with three heads, named Imagination, Falsehood, and Perjury. John Bunyan, too, has his Giant Despair, etc., and others will readily occur to the reader's mind. In the Arthurian romance of Sir Gawayne, that hero is said to have been endowed with "supernatural increase and decline of strength that *corresponded to the movement of the sun*." This is not without significance, as a personification of natural force. It corresponds, too, in a remarkable degree, with Mr. Cox's interpretations of some of the elder Greek myths.

Lord Bacon, in his "Wisdom of the Ancients," referring to what is called the allegorical theory, as a method of interpreting the antient mythology, says,—"I freely and willingly confess that I am inclined to the opinion, that not a few of the fables of the antient poets contained from their very origin a hidden mystery and allegory, for who can be so obstinately blind to evidence, that, when he hears that after the extermination of the giants, Fame was brought forth as a posthumus sister to them, he does not immediately apply the story

to these party murmurs and seditious rumours which are wont to spread themselves amongst a people for awhile after the suppression of rebellions? Or when he hears that the giant Typhon cut away and carried off the sinews of Jupiter, and that they were stolen from him, and restored to Jupiter by Mercury; how can he but perceive immediately that this is to be referred to powerful rebellions, by which the sinews of kings, their revenue and authority, are cut out; yet not so but by mildness of address and wisdom of edicts, as it were by stolen means, the minds of subjects within a short time are reconciled, and the power of kings restored to them. Or when he hears that in that memorable expedition of the gods against the giants, the ass of Silenus became by his braying an instrument of great value in dispersing these giants; must he not clearly see that this was imagined of those vast projects of rebels, which are mostly dissipated by light rumours and vain consternation? There is also another not unimportant an indication of the existence of a hidden and involved sense; namely, that some of the fables are so absurd and senseless in their outward narration, that they seem to show their nature at first sight, and cry for exposition by means of a parable. Above all, one consideration has been of great weight and importance with me—that most of the fables of mythology appear by no means to have been invented by those who relate them, such as Homer, Hesiod, and the rest; for where it clearly made manifest to us that they proceeded from that age and those authors by whom they are celebrated, and thence transmitted to us, we should surely, I conjecture, not have been induced to expect anything great or lofty from such an origin as this. But he who considers the subject more attentively will discover that they are related to posterity as things already received and believed, not then for the first time imagined and offered to mankind. And this it is which has increased their estimation in my eyes, as being neither discovered by the poets themselves nor belonging to their age, but a kind of sacred relics, the light air of better ages, which, *passing through the traditions of earlier nations*, have been breathed into the trumpets and pipes of these Grecians."

The passage of these giant traditions into the romances of modern chivalry may easily be traced. King Arthur himself was a hero of colossal proportions. He is still thought, as we have already seen, like Barbarossa and others, to lie entranced in the recesses of more than one mountain. He was attended by the magician Merlin, and he and his followers performed superhuman feats. He slew many giants of prodigious size, including Ritho, who had clothed

himself in furs made from the beards of vanquished kings, and the Spanish giant, who had borne away Helena, the niece of Hoel, and fled with her to the top of St. Michael's Mount.

In Pulci's "Morgante Maggiore," Orlando, one of Charlemagne's Paladins, slays the two giants, Passamont and Alabaster, and converts, or rather accepts of the miraculous conversion of, a third, Morgante, to Christianity.

The hero, Beowulf, the Geát, in the oldest Anglo-Saxon poem extant, is believed by Kemble and others to be a personified warrior form of Gautr, Odin's name in the Edda, as the god of abundance. The giant Grendel, whom he slew, was a malignant demon that carried desolation around. He is described as holding "the moors, the fen, and fastnesses." Professor Morley, in his English summary of the poem, says,—"Forbidden the homes of mankind, the daughters of Cain brought forth in darkness misshapen giants, elves, and orkens, such giants as warred long with God, and he was one of these." This giant is believed to have had his haunt at Hartlepool, on the coast of Durham. His mother, who was a kind of aquatic demon, was thought to occupy a "bottomless" pool, from which the town, in part, takes its name.

The King Arthur legend, which the Rev. John Whitaker locates at Manchester, notwithstanding its relatively modern Norman-French externals, still exhibits a strong flavour of the older traditions. According to an episode in the "*Morte Darthur*," this Saxon champion, Sir Tarquin, or Torquin, was giant enough to conquer and capture three knights in one encounter. Indeed, he is sometimes described as the "Giant." There is a tradition yet extant in the neighbourhood, that the said Tarquin threw the huge stone, which lies by the roadside near Longford Bridge, from his residence at Knot Mill, to its present location, a distance of nearly two miles. The stone really is the pedestal of an ancient cross, similar to the many yet to be seen in various parts of Lancashire and Cheshire. It presents, however, the peculiarity of two square mortise holes for the support of the upright shaft. These, popular tradition says, Tarquin expressly made for the insertion of his thumb and finger when engaged in hurling the ponderous mass as a "quoit" or plaything. It is likewise said to have been used, at some distant period, as a "plague-stone," and that the two holes were filled with vinegar or some other disinfectant. This story is not improbable. The sacred character of such a relic would add to the faith of the neighbouring inhabitants in the efficacy of the means adopted to avoid infection. It is said that provisions,

etc., were left on or near the stone by the country people, and that the towns-folk deposited the understood price in one of the holes containing the vinegar, which was believed to render the coins innocuous as plague conductors. Sir Lionel of Liones, the first of the brothers of Sir Lancelot of the Lake, who succumbed to Tarquin's prowess whilst endeavouring to rescue the three captives referred to, tells us, "He never beheld so stout a knight, so handsome a man, and so well accoutered a hero." He lived in a plain, surrounded by a dense forest. His castle, John Whitaker says, was formed out of the ruins of the Roman fortress at Castlefield, Manchester. Sir Ector de Maris, another brother of Sir Lancelot, rambling in search of adventures, and hearing that "within a mile was a castle, strong and well ditched, and by it, upon the left hand, a ford; and that over this grew a fair tree, on the branches of which were hung the shields of the many gallant knights who had been overcome by the owner of the castle; and at the stem was a basin of copper, with a Latin inscription, which challenged any knight to strike it, and summon the castellans to a contest. Ector came to the place, saw the shields, recognised many that belonged to his associates at the Round Table, and particularly noticed his brother's. Fired at the sight, he beat violently on the basin, and then gave his horse drink at the ford. And immediately a knight appeared on horseback behind him, and called him to come out of the water. He turned himself directly. He engaged the knight, was conquered, and taken prisoner by him." The story goes on to relate that—"The brother of both these unfortunate heroes, Sir Lancelot, whom we left sleeping before, in the forest adjoining to the castle, *had been carried from thence by enchantment*, and confined for some time." He, however, recovered his liberty, and "in the midst of a highway he heard that a knight dwelt very near, *who was the most redoubted champion that ever existed*, and had conquered, and now kept in prison, no less than sixty-four of King Arthur's knights. He hastened to the place. He came to the ford and tree, and let his horse drink at the ford, and then beat upon the basin with the end of his spear. This he did so long and so heartily, that he drove the bottom out; and yet no one answered. He then rode along the gates of the castle almost half an hour. At last he descried Sir Torquin coming upon the road with a captive knight. He advanced and challenged him. The other gallantly accepted the challenge, defying him and all his fellowship of the Round Table. They fought. The encounter lasted no less than four hours. Sir Lancelot at last slew his antagonist, took the keys of his castle, and

released all the prisoners within it, who instantly repaired to the armoury there, and furnished themselves completely."

In a succeeding adventure, a few days afterwards, Sir Lancelot encountered in the forest, at the entrance of a village, what the romance terms a "foul churl," who "dashed at him with a great club, full of iron spikes." Sir Lancelot, in return, drew his sword, and "smote him dead upon the earth." He proved to be the porter of a neighbouring castle, inhabited by "two great giants, well armed save their heads, and with two horrible clubs in their hands." Lancelot, nothing daunted, with his shield, "warded off one giant's stroke, and clove the other with his sword from the head downward to the chest. When the first giant saw that he ran away mad with fear; but Sir Lancelot ran after him, and smote him through the shoulder, and shove him down his back, so that he fell dead." This victory released "a band of sixty ladies and young damsels," some of whom had been imprisoned by the giants during seven years.

A correspondent of the *Irish Times*, in a recent paper on "Legends of the Tichborne Family," says,—"The preservation of the Round Table, or what was shown as such by Henry VIII. to Charles of France, is due to them. This table is, I believe, shown in what are the remains of the ancient chapel or church of St. Stephen, Winchester. It is now riddled with Cromwell's bullets, having been unsuccessfully defended against him by one of the Tichbornes and Lord Ogle. Whether at such a table ever sat

> The faultless king,
> That passionate perfection,

matters little. Who would not now say with the bard,

> I know the Round Table, my friend of old.

We know it through its offsprings, 'Elaine,' 'Enid,' 'Guinevere,' and a host of others. The table, with its twenty-four names, is the origin of our romance of romances—*la creme de la creme*—of legends!"

Mr. Timbs, in "Historic Ninepins," says, "the existing representative Round Table is of wood, and is preserved at Winchester, and hangs upon the interior eastern wall of the County Hall. The decorations of the table indicate a date not later nor much earlier than the reign of Henry VIII., and the figure of Arthur has been repainted within the time of living memory." King Edward III. founded an order in commemoration of the British warrior, and in 1344 entertained the knights at Windsor Castle at a Round Table two hundred feet in diameter.

Several circular mounds in various parts of England, including a remarkable one near Penrith, are by traditionary wisdom each honoured with the name of "King Arthur's Round Table." Bishop Percy tells us that the term "round table" is not a speciality of the King Arthur legends, but that it is common to all the ages of chivalry. In support of this he refers to Dugdale's description of a grand tournament given by Roger de Mortimer, at Kenilworth, in the reign of Edward the First. Dugdale says,—"Then began the Round Table, so called by reason that the place wherein they practised those feats was environed with a strong wall made in a round form." This is confirmed by an expression common with Matthew Paris, when describing jousts and tournaments. He styles them "*Hastiludia Mensæ Rotundæ.*" Wace makes mention of the Round Table of Arthur in his metrical romance, but Geoffrey of Monmouth has no reference to it, either in his pretended "History," or in his "Life of Merlin." Nevertheless in the romance, the "Morte Darthur," it is expressly stated that Merlin made it "in token of the roundness of the world." It is evidently, like other circular forms, a sun type, or phallic symbol. Ellis, in his "Specimens of the Early English Romances," on the authority of the metrical one of which Merlin is the hero, says,—"The Round Table was intended to assemble the best knights in the world. High birth, great strength, activity and skill, fearless valour, and firm fidelity to their suzerain were indispensably requisite for an admission into this order. They were bound by oath to assist each other at the hazard of their own lives; to attempt singly the most perilous adventures; to lead, when necessary, a life of monastic solitude; to fly to arms on the first summons; and never to retire from battle till they had defeated the enemy, unless when night interfered and separated the combatants." The number of knights belonging to the order appears to have varied at different times; but one hundred or upwards is most generally referred to. The table was originally constructed by the magician Merlin for Uther Pendragon, Arthur's father. It passed from him to Leodigan, King of Carmalide, the father of Guenevere, the wife of Arthur. The famous round table formed part of the dower of the queen on her marriage with the popular hero.

The manner in which traditions sometimes become interwoven with legends of more modern date is aptly illustrated by the fact recorded in the "Vetus Ceremoniale" MS., and endorsed by Du Cange, "that the chivalrous order of the Knights of the Round Table was instituted by King Arthur and the Duke of Lancaster." If Arthur

ever lived at all, he lived in the fifth and sixth centuries. Geoffrey of Monmouth says, after being mortally wounded, "he gave up the crown of Britain to his kinsman, Constantine, the son of Cader, Duke of Cornwall, in the five hundred and forty-second year of our Lord's incarnation." Roger de Poictou, the first *Earl* of Lancaster, flourished in the twelfth; and Henry, the first *Duke*, about a couple of centuries afterwards! But dates are little regarded by those who traffic in the "mythic lore" of the mysterious "olden time."

The Rev. G. W. Cox successfully shows that the principal materials of the Arthurian legends are identical with those which underlie the Hindoo, Grecian, Teutonic, and other Aryan myths. He contends that Arthur is another phase of Achilleus, or Sigurd, or Perseus. He says,—"Round him are other brave knights, and these not less than himself must have their adventures; and thus Arthur and Balin answer respectively to Achilleus and Odysseus in the Achaian hosts. A new element is brought into the story with the Round Table, which forms part of the dowery of Guinevere." This dowery he regards as the equivalent of, and as fatal to him as the treasures of the Argive Helen were to Menelaus. Referring to the "San Græal," he says,—"This mystic vessel is at once a storehouse of food as inexhaustible as the table of the Ethiopians, and a talismanic test as effectual as the goblets of Oberon and Tristram. The good Joseph of Arimathea, who had gathered up in it the drops of blood which fell from the side of Jesus when pierced by the centurion's spear, was nourished by it alone through his weary imprisonment of two and forty years; and when at length, having either been brought by him to Britain, or preserved in heaven, it was carried by angels to the pure Titurel, and shrined in a magnificent temple, it supplied to its worshippers the most delicious food, and preserved them in perpetual youth. As such it differs in no way from the horn of Amaltheia, or any other of the oval vessels which can be traced back to the emblem of the Hindu Sacti." He afterwards adds,—"The myth which corrupted the worshippers of Tammuz in the Jewish temple has supplied the beautiful picture of unselfish devotion which sheds a marvellous glory on the career of the pure Sir Galahad."

The Arthur of romance is in fact the creation of writers of a later age, or later ages, than the conquest of Britain by the Angles and Saxons, and not of contemporary bardic historians. The British chieftain, who fought against Ida and his Angles in the North of England, and whose territory is believed to have extended from the Clyde to the Ribble, with a varying boundary on the east, is named

Urien. He is the great hero of the bard Taliesin. Amongst his other great qualities, the poet enumerates the following :—"Protector of the land, usual with thee is headlong activity and the drinking of ale, and ale for drinking, and fair dwelling and beautiful raiment." Llywarch Hen, or the old, another Keltic poet, born about the year 490, incidentally mentions Arthur as chief of the Cymry of the south, or, as Professor Morley puts it, "what Urien was in the north, Arthur was in the south." Llywarch Hen was present at the bloody battle in which his lord Geraint (one of the knights introduced into the succeeding romances), and a whole host of British warriors perished. The said bard likewise brought away the head of Urien in his mantle, after his decapitation by the sword of an assassin.

Amongst the kings and lords who attended Arthur's first feast at "Carlion," in Wales, was, according to Sir Thomas Malory's "Mort Darthur," "King Uriens of Gore, with four hundred knights with him."

The earliest of the written Arthurian romances are to be found in the History of the Britains ascribed to Nennius, but who he was, or when the work was compiled, is not known. Some ascribe it to the end of the eighth, others to the end of the tenth century. Geoffrey of Monmouth published his historical romance in the twelfth century. He, however, in his dedicatory epistle to Robert, Earl of Gloucester, acknowledges, somewhat regretfully, that he "found nothing said" about Arthur and several other of his mythical Kings in either Gildas or Bede. William of Malmesbury, in the first part of his history, speaks of this semi-mythic warrior in the following terms : "That Arthur, about whom the idle tales of the Bretons (nugæ Britonum) craze to this day, one worthy not to have misleading fables dreamed about him, but to be celebrated in true history, since he sustained for a long time his tottering country, and sharpened for war the broken spirits of his people." This was most probably written a few years before the appearance of Geoffrey's work. About forty years afterwards, his countryman, Gerald, condemned Geoffrey's history as spurious. He had arrived at this conclusion in the following singular manner. One Melerius, a Welshman of Caerleon, had "an extraordinary familiarity with unclean spirits," and he was enabled, by "their assistance, to fortel future events. . . . He knew when anyone spoke falsely in his presence, for he saw the devil, as it were, leaping and exulting on the tongue of the liar. . . . If the evil spirits oppressed him too much the Gospel of St. John was placed on his bosom, when, like birds, they immediately vanished; but when that book was removed, and the

History of the Britons by Geoffry Arthur was substituted in its place, they instantly reappeared in great numbers, and remained a longer time than usual on his body and on the book ! !" William of Newberry, too, some half a century after the publication of Geoffrey's work, repudiated it in the following emphatic manner :—"A certain writer has come up in our times to wipe out the blots on the Britons, weaving together ridiculous figments about them, and raising them with impudent vanity high above the virtue of the Macedonians and the Romans. This man is named Geoffrey, and has the by-name of Arturus, because he cloaked with the honest name of History, coloured in Latin phrase, the fables about Arthur, taken from the old tales of the Bretons, with increase of his own. . . . Moreover, in his book, that he calls the History of the Britons, how saucily and how shamelessly he lies almost throughout, no one, unless ignorant of the old histories, when he falls upon that book, can doubt." William concludes with the following emphatic sentence : "Therefore, as in all things we trust Bede, whose wisdom and sincerity are beyond doubt, so that fabler with his fables shall be straightway spat out by us all." Geoffrey's work was, as Professor Morley observes, "a natural issue of its time, and is, indeed, the source of one of the purest streams of English poetry." It was afterwards abridged, translated, versified, and paraphrased. New fancies were added, sometimes from Breton traditions, and sometimes from the fertile brains of more modern poets and writers of romance. The "Mort Artus," "The Quest of the Sangreal," and the "Lancelot of the Lake" stories were written by Archdean Walter Map, the friend of Gerald de Barri, commonly called Geraldus Cambrensis. Map flourished during the latter portion of the twelfth century. In 1485, Caxton printed a complete collection of the Arthur legends, "after a copy," as he says, "unto me delivered, which copy Sir Thomas Malorye did take out of certain books of French and reduced it into English." It is entitled, "A Book of the noble Hystoryes of King Arthur, and of certen of his Knyghtes, which book was reduced in to Englysshe by Sir Thomas Malory, Knight."

Some other giant traditions yet hold their ground in Lancashire and the neighbourhood. One at Worsley, near Manchester, the seat of the Earl of Ellesmere, appears to be but a duplication of the Tarquin legend. Perhaps the immense tunneling, and the miles of underground canal in connection with the Bridgewater Trust collieries, and other results of Brindley's engineering skill, may have influenced

the relatively modern vulgar mind in the transference of the locality of Tarquin's stronghold from Castle-field to Worsley. Or perhaps the second adventure of Sir Lancelot, when he encountered the "foul churl" and his giant masters, may have fastened itself upon this locality.

Dorning Rasbotham, 1787, visited the township of Turton, in Lancashire, for the purpose of inspecting what he described as the "*Hanging* or *Giant's Stone*." He says:—

"The tradition of the common people is that it was thrown by a certain giant, upon a certain occasion (the nature of which they do not specify), from Winter Hill, on the opposite range, to this place; and they whimsically fancy that certain little hollows in the stone are the impression made by the giant's hand at the time he threw it; but I own I could not find out the resemblance which was noticed to me. It appears, however, to have long excited attention; for, though it is a hard grey moor-stone, a rude mark of a cross, of about seven inches by six, hath, apparently, at a very distant period of time, been cut upon the top of it. It is elevated upon another piece of rock; and its greatest length is fourteen feet, its depth in the thickest part five feet eight inches, and its greatest breadth upon the top, which is nearly flat, about nine feet. A thorough-going antiquarian would call this a Druidical remain."

Traditions of this class are very common, especially in districts were huge rocks lay apparently unconnected with the general mountain masses. As I have previously observed, striated boulders, brought from a great distance by what geologists term the "glacial drift," are especially regarded as *débris* resulting from giant warfare or amusement. Many rocks of this class lying to the south of Pendle Hill, near Great Harwood, I am informed, are still looked upon by the vulgar as stones which have been hurled by giants from the surrounding hills. If we regard them as the "frost giants" of the Scandinavian myths, it is by no means an inapt personification of the gigantic force exhibited by iceberg or glacier action.

A tradition in the neighbourhood of Stockport yet asserts that on the site of a ruined building, with the remains of a moat, called "Arden or Hardon Hall," on the southern bank of the river Tame, an ancient castle once existed. John o'Gaunt is said to have slept in it. The tradition, moreover, further informs us that at some very remote period a huge giant occupied the same fortress, and that he and a colossal rival, on the Rother or Mersey at Stockport, carried on a long desultory warfare by throwing stones and shooting arrows

at each other. The Arden monster, at length becoming disgusted at the tediousness of this ineffectual style of combat, assembled his retainers, attacked the Stockport giant in his stronghold, slew him, and utterly exterminated his followers.

May not this tradition have some remote connection with the struggles between the Christian Northumbrians and the Mercian pagans in the seventh century? The Mersey formed then the boundary line between the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, as it now separates Lancashire from Cheshire. Or, as John o'Gaunt is mixed up in some way with it, may not an old legend have become confounded with events attendant upon some of the insurrectionary movements of the early Norman barons, or of the Wars of the Roses? Stockport was once a strongly fortified position, and is yet considered one of the "keys of the county of Lancaster."

The giant and the ogre seem to have eventually passed into the tyrant lord, who imprisoned in the dungeons of his strong castle captive knights who succumbed to his prowess, and fair maidens whom he had abducted. The magical or sorcery element, likewise, is still to be found clinging to similar modern stories; and, notwithstanding the more polished manners and elegant costume in which they are presented, they quite as much partake of the character of the nursery tales about champions and ogres of the "Jack the Giant Killer" type, as modern gentlemen do of their savage aboriginal ancestry. Hallam, referring to the plundering barons of the "middle ages," and the legends engrafted upon their ferocious deeds, says:—

"Germany appears to have been, upon the whole, the country where downright robbery was most unscrupulously practised by the great. Their castles, erected on almost inaccessible heights among the woods, became the secure receptacles of predatory bands, who spread terror over the country. From these barbarian lords of the dark ages, as from a living model, the romances are said to have drawn their giants and other disloyal enemies of true chivalry."

The giants, as I have shown, are evidently of an age much earlier than the mediæval barons, but they and their doings may have furnished *nuclei* around which the older myths may be said to have re-crystallised themselves. Hallam, again, when discussing the question of chivalry, refers to the connection of the relatively modern romances and the older traditions. He says:—

"The real condition of society, it has sometimes been thought, might suggest stories of knight errantry, which were wrought up into the popular romances of the middle ages. A baron, abusing the

advantage of an inaccessible castle in the fastnesses of the Black Forest or the Alps, to pillage the neighbourhood and confine travellers in his dungeon, though neither a giant nor a Saracen, was a monster not less formidable, and could, perhaps, as little be destroyed without the aid of disinterested bravery. Knight errantry, indeed, as a profession, cannot rationally be conceived to have had any existence, beyond the precints of romance. Yet there seems no improbability in supposing that a knight, journeying through uncivilised regions in his way to the Holy Land, or to the court of a foreign sovereign, might find himself engaged in adventures not very dissimilar to those which are the theme of romance. We cannot indeed expect to find any historical evidence of such incidents."

The disinterested chivalrous motive of the knight-errants of mediæval romance appears to have intimate relationship to the unselfishness of the heroes of the Greek solar myths, whose toil was always undergone for the benefit of others rather than themselves. The knight-errants' devotion to their "lady-loves," especially in some of its features, seems allied to the solar heroes' love for the dawn goddesses.

If "giants" represent so many mythical characteristics it is not unlikely that something of the kind may be found in connection with their corporeal antitheses, the dwarfs. Timbs, in his "Historic Ninepins," has the following pertinent remarks on this subject:—

"Tom Thumb, it is conjectured, if the truth should be discovered, would be found to be a mythological personage. His adventure bears a near analogy to the rite of adoption into the Brahminical order, a ceremony which still exists in India, and to which the Raja of Tanjore submitted many years ago. In Dubois's work there is an account of a diminutive deity, whose person and character are analogous to those of Tom Thumb. He, too, was not originally a Brahmin, but became one by adoption, like some of the worthies in the Ramayana. Compare the multiplicity of Tom Thumb's metamorphoses with those of Taliesin, as quoted by Davies, we shall then see that this diminutive personage is a slender but distinct thread of communication between the Brahminical and Druidical superstitions.*

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* At page 34, reference is made to the so-called "Druid temple at Bramham, near Harrowgate, Yorkshire." These huge rocks, locally termed "Bramham Crags," are not situated in either a parish, township, or hamlet of that name. Does the appellation Bramha-m throw any additional light on Mr. Timbs's suggestion? If it be merely an accidental coincidence, it is certainly a remarkable one, and deserves further consideration.

Even independent of the analogy between his transformations and those of Taliesin, his station in the court of King Arthur (evidently the mythological Arthur), marks him as a person of the highest fabulous antiquity in this island; while the adventure of the cow, to which there is nothing analogous in Celtic mythology, appears to connect him with India."

In the mythology of the southern Aryans, there are demon dwarfs, as well as the demon giants previously referred to. The former are termed Panis. Vishnu, at the request of Indra, assumed the form of a dwarf, and obtained the famous boon of three paces from Bali, the conqueror of the gods. According to the Ramayana, then "the thrice-stepping Vishnu assumed a miraculous form, and with three paces took possession of the worlds. For with one step he occupied the whole earth, with a second the eternal atmosphere, and with a third the sky. Having then assigned to the Asura Bali an abode in Pâtala (the infernal region), he gave the empire of the three worlds to Indra."

CHAPTER XI.

WEREWOLVES AND THE TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS.

> Thou almost makes me waver in my faith,
> To hold opinion with Pythagoras,
> That souls of animals infuse themselves
> Into the trunks of men; thy currish spirit
> Governed a wolf, who, hanged for human slaughter,
> Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
> And whilst thou layest in thy unhallowed dam,
> Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
> Are wolfish, bloody, starved, and ravenous.
>
> *Shakspere.*

There may still be traced in Europe, and even in England, some remains of the Eastern belief in metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls. The superstitious reverence for the robin, the wren, and other birds of the Aryan lightning class, points to the belief that the bodies of birds and animals were supposed to be sometimes tenanted by the souls of men, and even by the gods themselves; or at least, that the latter did frequently assume their forms for some special purpose or other. Several nursery stories, such as "Beauty and the Beast," "The White Cat," "Little Red Riding Hood," etc., yet very popular amongst others than the juvenile section of the population, point in a similar direction. These stories are no mere modern inventions. Mr. Cox regards "Beauty and the Beast" but as one form of the Greek myth "Erôs and Psychê." One of the favourite feats of the celebrated British magician, Merlin, was the conversion of men into beasts. Cæsar says: "It is especially the object of the Druids to inculcate this—that souls do not perish, but, after death, pass into other bodies; and they consider that, by this belief more than anything else, men may be led to cast away the fear of death, and to become courageous. Shakspere has several remarkable references to this superstition, one of which is quoted at the head of this chapter. Another instance occurs in *Hamlet*, in the scene where Ophelia, in her mental aberration, quotes snatches of old ballads. She says, "They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but we know not what we may be. God be at your table."

Caliban, when remonstrating with the drunken Stephano and Trinculo, on their dallying with the fine clothes at the mouth of the cave of Prospero, instead of taking the magician's life at once, says ;—

> I will have none on't ; we shall lose our time,
> And all be turned to barnacles, or to apes
> With foreheads villainous low.

The elfin sprite Puck, after placing the ass's head on to Bottom, and terrifying Peter Quince's celebrated amateur *corps dramatique*, exclaims :—

> I'll follow you, I lead you about a round
> Through bog, through bush, through brake, through briar ;
> Sometimes a horse I'll be, sometimes a hound,
> A hog, a headless bear, sometimes a fire ;
> And neigh, and bark, and grunt and roar, and burn,
> Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

Another instance will be found in "The Twelfth Night," where the clown, under the pretence of his being "Sir Topas, the Curate," questions Malvolio, when confined in a dark room, as a presumed lunatic :—

Mal.—I am no more mad than you are ; make the trial of it in any constant question.

Clown.—What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild-fowl ?

Mal.—That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird.

Clown.—What thinkest thou of his opinion ?

Mal.—I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve his opinion.

Clown.—Fare thee well. Remain thou still in darkness : thou shalt hold the opinion of Pythagoras ere I will allow of thy wits, and fear to kill a woodcock, lest thou dispossess the soul of thy grandam. Fare thee well.

At an early age, Walter Savage Landor transmitted to Dr. Samuel Parr an essay on the origin of the religion of the Druids. His biographer, John Forster, thus summarises its argument :—"It appeared to Landor that Pythagoras, who settled in Italy, and had many followers in the Greek colony of the Phocæans at Marseilles, had engrafted on a barbarous and bloodthirsty religion the human doctrine of the metempsychosis ; for that finding it was vain to say, 'Do not murder,' as none ever minded that doctrine, he frightened the savages by saying, 'If you are cruel even to beasts and insects, the cruelty will fall upon yourselves ; you will be the same.' He explained also the 'beans' of the old philosopher in the exact way that Coleridge took credit for afterwards originating ; though in this both moderns had been anticipated by sundry other discoverers, beginning with Plutarch himself." The answer of the "kindly old scholar" is

both learned and characteristic. He says, "I thank you for your very acute and masterly reasoning about Pythagoras, but I am no convert to his being in Gaul; for the doctrine of transmigration is much older, and prevailed among the Celts and Scythians long before Pythagoras. It is believed, even now, in the north of Europe, and would naturally suggest itself to any reflecting barbarian. However, you have done very well in your hypothesis."

According to Herodotus, the Egyptians were the first who believed in the immortality of the soul. After the demise of the body the soul was supposed to pass from one of the lower animals to another, until it had been duly located in the forms of all, terrestrial, aquatic, and winged. After this had been accomplished, the human form was again assumed. Three thousand years were considered necessary to the effecting of this complete metempsychosis.

The Pythagorean doctrine appears to have been originally regarded in the light of a purification. One commentator thus summarises it:—"The souls, previous to their entering into human bodies, floated in the air, from whence they were inhaled by the process of breathing at the moment of birth. At the moment of death, they descended into the lower world, where they were probably supposed to dwell a certain number of years, after which they again rose into the upper world, and floated in the air, until they entered into new bodies. When by this process their purification had become complete, the souls were raised to higher regions, where they continued to exist, and to enjoy the presence and company of the gods."

It is a general opinion that the history of no ancient sage or philosopher has been so much obscured as that of Pythagoras. The fables and miracles interwoven into the biographies of Porphyrius, Diogenes Laertius, and Iamblicus, have largely contributed to this result.

The Indoo doctrine, although differing slightly in detail, presents sufficient resemblance both to that of Pythagoras and that of the Egyptians to suggest their common origin. All agree in averring that the souls of men, after death, pass into other bodies. A most religious life, however, amongst the Indoos, exempted the individual from the penalty of the metempsychosis, the soul, on its departure, being immediately absorbed into the divine essence. Mr. Colebrooke, in the Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society, published a translation of some extracts from the *Brahma-sûtras*, or aphorisms on the Vedenta doctrine by Bâdarâyana, amongst which is the following, bearing on this subject:—

"The soul passes from one state to another invested with a subtle frame, consisting of elementary particles, the seed or rudiment of a grosser body. Departing from that which it occupied, it ascends to the moon, where, clothed with an aqueous form, it experiences the recompence of its works; and whence it returns to occupy a new body with resulting influence of its former deeds. But he who has attained the true knowledge of God does not pass through the same stages of retreat, but proceeds directly to reunion with the Supreme Being, with which he is identified, as a river at its confluence with the sea merges therein altogether. His vital faculties and the elements of which his body consists are absorbed completely and absolutely; both name and form cease; and he becomes immortal without parts or members."

In the Welsh romance, "The History of Taliesin," composed not earlier than the thirteenth century, though often attributed to the sixth (the era of the poet) is a curious story of successive transformations. Caridwen, the wife of Tegid Voel, had an ugly son she desired to make learned as a set-off to his deformity. She procured a cauldron, and proceeded to boil a charmed mixture in order to procure "the three blessed drops of the grace of inspiration." During her absence, the three charmed drops flew from the cauldron on to the finger of one of her watchers, and he, sucking his finger, to relieve himself of the pain, imbibed the inspiration. In fear, he took to his heels, and she ran after him. What followed is thus given in Professor Morley's summary of the romance in English:—

"And he saw her and changed himself into a hare. But she changed herself into a greyhound and turned him. And he ran towards a river and became a fish. But she, in form of an otter, chased him until he was fain to become a bird. Then she, as a hawk, followed him, and gave him no rest in the sky. Just as he was in fear of death, he saw a heap of winnowed wheat on the floor of a barn, and dropped among the wheat and turned himself into one of the grains. Then she transformed herself into a high-crested black hen, and scratched among the wheat with her feet, and found him out and swallowed him."

From this germ the woman, in due course, was delivered of a son, who, after some romantic adventures, was named Taliesin, "the shining forehead." The three drops had done their work effectually, it seems, for he became a perfect prodigy.

Nash, in his "Christ's Teares over Jerusalem," published in 1613, records a curious instance of faith in this transformation superstition

in England. He says, "They talk of an oxe that told the bell at Wolwitch, and howe from an oxe he transformed himself to an old man, and from an old man to an infant, and from an infant to a young man."

In an old work, entitled a "Help to Discourse," published in 1633, is the following passage:—"Q. Wherefore hath it anciently been accounted good luck if a *wolfe crosse our way*, but ill lucke if a hare crosse it?—A. Our ancestors, in times past, as they were merry conceited, so were they witty; and thence it grew that they held it good lucke if a wolf crost the way and was gone without any more danger and trouble; but ill lucke if a hare crost and escaped them, that they had not taken her." Lupton, in "Notable Things," published in 1660, refers to Pliny as reporting "that men in ancient times did fasten upon the gates of their towns the heads of *wolves*, whereby to put away witchery, sorcery, or enchantment, which many hunters observe or do to this day, but to what use they know not." Werenfels informs us that when a "superstitious person goes abroad he is not so much afraid of the teeth as the unexpected sight of a wolf, lest he should deprive him of his speech. Brand, referring to the superstition which asserts that if a wolf first sees a man, the latter is suddenly struck dumb, says, "To the relators of this Icaligar wishes as many blows as at different times he had seen wolves without losing his voice. This is well answered." He further notices the belief "*that men are sometimes transformed into wolves, and again from wolves into men*," and adds, "Of this vulgar error, which is as old as Pliny's time, that author exposes the falsehoods."

Many other authorities refer to this superstition. Giraldus Cambrensis relates a story of a priest being addressed one evening, on his way from Ulster to Meath, by a wolf, who informed him that he belonged to a certain sept or clan in Ulster, "two of whom, male and female, were every seven years compelled, through a curse laid on them by St. Natalis, to depart both from their natural form and from their native soil." They therefore took the form of wolves. If alive at the end of seven years, two others of the sept "took their places under like conditions, and the first pair returned to their pristine nature and country." Camden expresses his disbelief of a story he heard in Tipperary, that there were men who every year were turned into wolves. Gervase, of Tilbury, speaks of were-wolves being common in England in his time (the thirteenth century); and reference is made to a wolf-woman in the Mabinogion, or fairy tales of the Welsh, of

about the same period. King John, of England, was suspected of being a were-wolf. It is asserted in an old chronicle that, in some such capacity, he uttered such frightful noises, after he was laid in his grave, in Worcester Cathedral, that the pious monks dug up his body, and removed it from the consecrated ground. One of the mediæval metrical romances, by an unknown English author, refers to this superstition. It is a translation of the "*Roman de Guillaume de Palerne*," and is entitled the "Romance of William the Werwolf."

Herodotus says the Greeks and Scythians settled on the shores of the Black Sea regarded the Neurians as wizards, and asserted that each individual was for a few days in the year transformed into a wolf. He speaks of a race of men who slept for six months at a time, and of others who could change themselves at will into the shape of wolves, and as easily resume their original form when desirable. He talks likewise of the Troglodites, or cave dwellers, a race of men, who having no human language, screeched like bats, and fed upon reptiles. They were likewise remarkable for their swiftness of foot.

Some of the Greek traditions represent the transformation of a man into a were-wolf as a punishment for having sacrificed a human victim unto a god. The offender was taken to the edge of a lake; he swam over, and, on reaching the other side, was changed into a wolf. In this condition he remained, roaming abroad with others of the species, for a period of nine years. If during this time he had abstained from eating human flesh, he resumed his original from, which, however, had not been exempt from the influence of increased age. There is remarkable coincidence in some respects between this myth and that related by Geraldus Cambrensis previously referred to, the significance of which Kelly justly regards as "worthy of note."

The Romans believed in the existence of the man-wolf, but attributed the phenomenon to magical arts. Petronius has recorded an incident which presents this superstition in a very graphic form. One Niceros, at a banquet given by Trimalchio, relates the following story:—

"It happened that my master was gone to Capua to dispose of some second-hand goods. I took the opportunity, and persuaded our guest to walk with me to our fifth milestone. He was a valiant soldier, and a sort of grim water-drinking Pluto. About cock-crow, when the moon was shining as bright as mid-day, we came amongst the monuments. My friend began addressing himself to the stars, but I was rather in a mood to sing or count them; and when I turned to look at him, lo! he had already stripped himself and laid

down his clothes near him. My heart was in my nostrils, and I stood like a dead man; but he made a mark round his clothes, and on a sudden became a wolf. Do not think I jest; I would not lie for any man's estate. But to return to what I was saying. When he became a wolf he began howling, and fled into the woods. At first I hardly knew where I was, and afterwards, when I went to take up his clothes, they were turned into stone. Who then died with fear but I? Yet I drew my sword, and went cutting the air right and left, till I reached the villa of my sweetheart. I entered the court-yard. I almost breathed my last, the sweat ran down my neck, my eyes were dim, and I thought I should never recover myself. My Melissa wondered why I was out so late, and said to me, 'Had you come sooner you might at least have helped us, for a wolf has entered the farm and worried all our cattle; but he had not the best of the joke, for all he escaped, for our slave ran a lance through his neck.' When I heard this I could not doubt how it was, and, as it was clear daylight, I ran home as fast as a robbed innkeeper. When I came to the spot where the clothes had been turned into stone, I could find nothing except blood. But when I got home I found my friend, the soldier, in bed, bleeding at the neck like an ox, and a doctor dressing his wound. I then knew that he was a turnskin; nor would I ever have broke bread with him again, no not if you had killed me."

In Germany many strange stories are told respecting these transformations. The result of wounding a were-wolf generally appears to be that the human shape is speedily resumed, but the injury inflicted remains notwithstanding. One of these stories is to the following effect:—A farmer and his wife were haymaking together, when suddenly the wife requested her husband to throw his hat at any wild beast that might come in his way. She then immediately disappeared. Soon afterwards a wolf was perceived to be swimming across a neighbouring river in the direction of the party of haymakers. The farmer, remembering his wife's injunction, threw his hat at the wolf, which the ravenous beast seized and tore to pieces. One of the men, however, stabbed the wolf with a pitchfork. This dissolved the spell; the wolf-form disappeared, but the dead body of the farmer's wife lay on the ground before the eyes of the astonished spectators!

These transformations are believed, in some instances, to be effected by a mere change of the external covering, like that of the cloud-maidens referred to in chapter I. of the present work. These mythical ladies were said to possess "shirts of swan plumage," by means of which they "transformed themselves into water foul,

especially swans." The "frost-giants," Thiassi and Suttungr, had each an "eagle-shirt," in which disguise they warred against the gods. The possession of these feathery garments was essential to their retention of the power of transformation. A variety of myths, fairy stories, etc., have sprung from the supposed capture and marriage of these maidens by men who have discovered them bathing, and stealthily appropriated their magic raiment. These swan-shirts, in the more modern myths, become the supernatural garments of the fairies, mermaids, etc., married to mortals, and without which they find it impossible to leave their husbands and resume their elfic nature.

On the west coast of Ireland the fishermen are loth to kill the seals, which once abounded in some localities, owing to a popular superstition that they enshrined "the souls of thim that were drowned at the flood." They were supposed to possess the power of casting aside their external skins, and disporting themselves in human form on the sea-shore. If a mortal contrived to become possessed of one of these outer coverings belonging to a female, he might claim her and keep her as his bride. This seems to point to the origin of the stories about "mermaids" and some similar sea monsters.

Dr. Hertz gives many examples of the prevalence of the were-wolf superstition in Germany. In some instances the bear occupies the place of the wolf. A girdle made of wolf or bear skin is supposed yet to possess the power of transforming a man into one or other of these animals. The skin of a man who has been hanged is considered equally potent. The girdle must have a buckle which possesses seven tags or tongues, and it is powerless when not affixed to the body. One were-wolf could carry a cow in his mouth. He devoured human beings, too, as well as cattle. He had, however, taught his wife how to treat him when in his lupine form. "She used to unbuckle his belt, and he became a rational man again." The wolf and the murderer were frequently hung on the same gallows, hence the old Saxon name for this structure, *varagtreo*, or wolf-tree. The mere certain recognition of a were-wolf is generally sufficient to dissolve the spell. In cases of doubt, steel or iron is thrown over the suspected animal. If this be done to a genuine were-wolf, "the skin splits crosswise on the forehead, and the naked man comes out through the opening." Kelly adds, "It frequently happens that the were-wolf is frozen, that is to say, invulnerable by ordinary weapons or missiles. In that case he must be shot with elder-pith, or with balls made of inherited silver." The were-wolf of the eastern portion

of the continent of Europe appears to be confounded with the vampire superstition, as in the Sclavonic tongues the same word is used to designate both these mythic monsters.

Baron Langon, in his "Evenings with Prince Cambacérès," relates a story of a vampire, or blood-sucker, named Rafin, on the authority of the celebrated Fouché. The astute chief of the police, if not absolutely imposed upon, was, certainly, much perplexed with the case. He says,—"I gave orders to have Rafin arrested, and he was placed in confinement. I paid him a visit. He was strongly bound, and in spite of his cries, supplications, and resistance, I resolutely plunged into his flesh a surgical instrument, which, without producing any injury, would cause an effusion of blood. When he perceived my object he became furiously irritated, and made inconceivable efforts to attack me. He threatened me with his future revenge; but, heedless of his violence, I thrust the instrument into him. No sooner did the first drop of blood appear than the six old wounds opened afresh. All efforts to stop the bleeding proved fruitless—and Rafin died." Some of the witnesses regarded the affair as a police trick, Fouché says,—"As to myself, I have sifted the matter deeply, and I am perplexed to the last degree. I cannot admit the reality of vampires; yet it is certain that I witnessed the facts I have stated." Two women were said to have pined away and died, owing to their intercourse with this man.

As recently as the year 1718, a solemn judicial enquiry took place at Caithness respecting the sufferings of one William Montgomery, who was reduced to a most miserable condition owing to the "gambols of a legion of cats." In Kirkpatrick Sharpe's introduction to Law's "Memorials," we read that the said Montgomery's man servant averred that the feline disturbers of his master's peace "spoke among themselves." The hypochondriac, at length, driven to desperation, attacked the enemy with "broadsword and axe," and utterly routed the catterwalling conclave, killing some and wounding others. The said cats turned out to be veritable witches, as was proved by the fact that two neighbouring "old women died immediately, and a third lost a leg, which, having been broken by a stroke of the hatchet, withered and dropped off."

It was customary, as recently as the sixteenth century, to punish alleged were-wolves as remorselessly as supposed witches. Many suffered at the stake. Kelly says, on the authority of Boquet *(Discours des Sorciers)*, that "a gentleman, looking out one evening from a window of his château, saw a hunter whom he knew, and asked

the man to bring him something on his return from the chase. The hunter was attacked in the plain by a great wolf, and, after a sharp conflict, cut off one of the fore paws with his hunting knife. On his way back he called at the château, and putting his hand into his game bag, to show the gentleman the wolf's paw, he drew out a human hand with a gold ring, which the gentleman at once recognised as his wife's. He looked for her, and found her in the kitchen with one arm concealed under her apron, and, on uncovering it, saw that the hand was gone. The lady was brought to trial, confessed (!), and was burnt at Ryon. Boquet says he had this story from a trustworthy person who had been on the spot a fortnight after the event."

In Denmark, Iceland, Germany, and the North of England, there exist many similar stories, but they are more or less connected with witchcraft, with which, indeed, they seem to have much in common. The chief feature is the transformation of a man into a horse, by a woman throwing a magic halter over his head while he is lying in bed. The woman, who is a disguised witch, then mounts the horse and gallops to the trysting place, where her compeers meet to revel. If the man-horse can contrive to slip the magic bridle from his head, and throw it over that of the woman, she is suddenly transformed into a mare, and in turn is ridden almost to death by her previous victim. One witch-mare, at Yarrowfoot, a few years ago, according to Mr. Henderson, was found afterwards to be shod in the usual manner, and sold to her own husband, who, on removing the bridle, saw standing before him his wife, with a horse shoe nailed to each hand and foot! Glanvil, in his "Saducismus Triumphatus," relates an instance in which a "great army of witches" was charged with performing this horse transformation feat on a large scale, at Blocula, in Sweden, in 1669.

There is a German story of a joiner at Bühl, who, being troubled with the nightmare, saw the elf enter his room, through a hole, in the shape of a cat. He caught the animal and nailed one of its paws to the floor. In the morning he was surprised to find his feline prisoner transformed into a handsome young woman perfectly naked. He married her, however; but, after they had had three children, she disappeared suddenly, in the form of a cat, through the hole by which she had entered, her husband having inadvertently removed the material with which he had blocked it up.

In East Prussia, they have a story of a girl, who, without her knowledge, was every evening transformed into a cat, and awoke much fatigued. One night her lover caught a cat, which had regu-

larly tormented and scratched him at night, and secured it in a sack. The next morning he found the cat transformed into his naked sweetheart. The story adds she was cured by the parson of the parish.

In 1633, a "second batch" of Lancashire witches was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death, at Lancaster; but after more elaborate investigation into the circumstances, first at Chester, under the presidency of the bishop, and afterwards at London, by the physicians and surgeons to the king, and again by the king himself, Charles I., fully convinced of their innocence, extended to them his royal pardon. The deposition of the principal witness, "Edward Robinson, sonne of Edmond Robinson, of Pendle Forest, mason, taken at Padiham, before Richard Shuttleworth and John Starkey, Esquires, two of his Majestie's Justices of Peace," affords curious evidence of the strength of this superstition little more than two centuries ago. The deponent sayeth that at the time he was occupied in "gettinge Bullas hee sawe two grey hounds, vizt., a blacke and a browne one, come runninge over the next field towards him. He verilie thinketh the one to be Mr. Butters and the other to be Mr. Robinsons, the said Mr. Butter and Mr. Robinson then havinge such like. And the said Grey Hounds came and fawned on him, they having about their necks either of them a Coller, to either of which Collers was tyed a strynge, which Collers, as this Informer affirmeth, did shine like gold, and he thinkinge that some either of Mr. Butters or Mr. Robinsons familie should have followed them, but seeinge noe bodie to followe them, hee tooke the said Grey-hounds thinkinge to hunte with them, and presentlie a hare did rise verie neere before him, at the sight whereof he cried 'Loo, loo, loo,' but the doggs would not runn, wherevpon hee beinge verie angrie tooke them, and with the string that were at their Collers tyed either of them to a little bush at the next hedge, and with a rodd that he had in his hand hee beate them, and instead of the blacke grey-hound one Dickensons wife stud vpp, a neighbour whom this Informer knoweth, and instead of the browne Greyhound a little Boy, whom this Informer knoweth not, at which sight this Informer being afrayd, endeavoured to runn awaie, but beinge stayed by the woeman, vizt. Dickensons wife, shee put her hand into her pocket, and pulled forth a piece of silver much like to a fayre shillinge, and offered to give it him to hold his tongue, and not to tell, which hee refused, sayinge, 'nay, thou art a witch,' wherevpon shee put her hand into her pocket againe, and pulled out a thing like unto a bridle that gingled, which shee put on the little Boyes head which stood vpp in the browne greyhounds stead, where-

vpon the said Boye stood vpp a white horse. Then ymmediatlie the said Dickensons wife tooke this Informer before her vpon the said horse." As in the case previously referred to, the party galloped off to a feast of witches. It is true Dr. Webster, who carefully examined the witness, informs us, in his "Display of Witchcraft," that "the boy Robinson, in more mature years, acknowledged that he had been instructed and suborned to make these accusations by his father and others, and that, of course, the whole was a fraud." Nevertheless, the belief in the probability of such transformations must have been very general and deeply rooted, otherwise such impostors could not have practised their villainy with the impunity they did. Witches, we have previously seen, were often transformed into hares. Margery Grant, the recently deceased Scotch witch, referred to in a previous chapter, "believed herself to be transmutable, and avers that she was, at times, actually changed by evil-disposed persons into a pony or a hare, and rode for great distances, or hunted by dogs, as the case might be."

Mr. A. Russel Wallace, in his "Malay Archipelago," says that it is yet "universally believed in Lombock that some men have the power to turn themselves into crocodiles, which they do for the sake of devouring their enemies, and many strange tales are told of such transformations. He adds that the islands of Bali and Lombock, situated to the east of Java, "are the only islands in the whole Archipelago in which the Hindoo religion still maintains itself—and they form the extreme point of the two great zoological divisions of the Eastern hemisphere."

The owl and the eagle, both lightning birds of the Aryan mythology, received divine honours from the Greeks. The eagle was Jove's emblem, the owl that of Pallas, or Athenê. The latter was sometimes called Glaucopis, or "owl-eyed," significant of the supernatural light which was presumed to radiate from her lightning orbs.

The owl is not the only bird that is believed to have been transformed into a human being skilled in the art of baking bread. The cuckoo and the woodpecker have been subjected to a similar metamorphosis. The legend of the owl and the baker's daughter appears to be still popular in Gloucestershire. The story is generally told with a view to prevent children and others from indulging in harsh conduct towards the poor. Douce relates the legend in the following terms:—

"Our Saviour went into a baker's shop where they were baking, and asked for some bread to eat: the mistress of the shop immedi-

ately put a piece of dough into the oven to bake for him; but was reprimanded by her daughter, who, insisting that the piece of dough was too large, reduced it to a very small size; the dough, however, immediately began to swell, and presently became a most enormous size, whereupon the baker's daughter cried out, 'Heugh, heugh, heugh!' which owl-like noise probably induced our Saviour to transform her into that bird for her wickedness."

Dasent, in his "Popular Tales from the Norse," gives a very minute version of this tradition, in which the purely heathen superstition is related with the nomenclature modernised. The names, however, are its only Christian attributes. It markedly exhibits the tendency of the vulgar to confound one mystery or tradition with another, to which I have previously referred. Dasent gives the story as follows:—

"In those days, when our Lord and St. Peter wandered upon earth, they came once to an old wife's house, who sat baking. Her name was Gertrude, and she had a red mutch on her head. They had walked a long way, and were both hungry, and our Lord begged hard for a bannock to stay their hunger. Yes, they should have it. So she took a little tiny piece of dough and rolled it out, but as she rolled it, it grew until it covered the whole griddle.

"Nay, that was too big; they couldn't have that. So she took a tinier bit still; but when that was rolled out it covered the whole griddle just the same, and that bannock was too big, she said; they couldn't have that either.

"The third time she took a still tinier bit—so tiny that you could scarce see it; but it was the same story over again—the bannock was too big.

"'Well,' said Gertrude, 'I can't give you anything; you must just go without, for all these bannocks are too big.'

"Then our Lord waxeth wroth, and said. 'Since you loved me so little as to grudge me a morsel of food, you shall have this punishment—you shall become a bird and seek your food between bark and bole, and never get a drop to drink save when it rains.'

"He had scarce said the last word before she was turned into a great black woodpecker, or Gertrude's bird, and flew from her kneading trough right up the chimney; and till this very day you may see her flying about, with her red mutch on her head, and her body all black, because of the soot in the chimney; and so she hacks and taps away at the trees for her food, and whistles when rain is coming, for she is ever athirst, and then she looks for a drop to cool her tongue."

Brand informs us that "the woodpecker's cry denotes wet."

Grimm tells a German version of the story, in which the hard-hearted baker is a man, but whose wife and six daughters were made of more charitable materials. They privately bestowed what he had publicly refused, and were rewarded by being converted into the "seven stars" (the Pleiades), while the baker was transformed into a cuckoo. The cuckoo is believed to continue his spring cry only so long as the "seven stars" are visible in the heavens. Another version says the cuckoo was a baker's or miller's man. He cheated the poor, and "when the dough swelled by God's blessing in the oven, he drew it out and nipped off a portion of it, crying each time "gukuk," which signifies "look! look!" For this crime he was converted into a cuckoo, and condemned to the perpetual repetition of the monotonous cry.

A Lancashire superstition exists referred to in Chapter IX., in which the plover is identified as the transmuted soul of a Jew. At least, when seven of them are seen together, they are called the "seven whistlers," and their musical chorus bodes ill or harm to those who hear it. The tradition represents them as the "souls of those Jews who assisted at the crucifixion, and in consequence were doomed to float in the air for ever."

Wordsworth, in his beautiful poem, "The White Doe of Rylstone," has preserved the memory of a Yorkshire tradition which asserts that the soul of the lady founder of Bolton Abbey revisited the ruins of the venerable pile, in the form of a spotless white doe.

> When Lady Aäliza mourned
> Her son, and felt in her despair,
> The pang of unavailing prayer;
> Her son in Wharf's abysses drowned,
> The noble boy of Egremound,
> From which affliction, when God's grace
> At length had in her heart found place,
> A pious structure fair to see,
> Rose up this stately Priory!
> The lady's work,—but now laid low;
> To the grief of her soul that doth come and go,
> In the beautiful form of this innocent doe:
> Which, though seemingly doomed in its breast to sustain
> A softened remembrance of sorrow and pain,
> Is spotless, and holy, and gentle, and bright,—
> And glides o'er the earth like an angel of light.

The Manx wren, the robin, and the stork are supposed to be inhabited by the souls of human beings. MacTaggart, speaking of the wren, says,—"Manx herring fishers dare not go to sea without one

of these birds taken dead with them, for fear of disasters and storms. Their tradition is of a *sea spirit* that hunted the *herring track*, attended always by storms, and at last it assumed the figure of a wren and flew away. So they think that when they have a dead wren with them all is snug. The poor bird had a sad life of it in that singular island. When one is seen at any time, scores of Manxmen start and hunt it down." The stork in Prussia, on the contrary, is protected from injury, owing to the belief that "he is elsewhere a man." Gervase of Tilbury informs us that in England it was regarded as both bird and man. It was a very wide-spread belief that the human soul left its earthly tabernacle in the form of a bird. The "Milky-way" is, in Finland and Lithuania, the "Birds' way," or the "Way of Souls." Grimm tells us that every member of a certain Polish noble family are turned into eagles at death. He adds the eldest daughter of the Pileck line, if they die unmarried, are transformed into doves, but, if married, into owls. Kelly relates an anecdote of a gentleman in Soho, London, who believed that the departing soul of his brother-in-law, in the form of a bird, tapped at his window at the time of his death. The mother and sister, in Grimm's story of "The White and the Black Bride," push the true bride into the stream. At the same or the following moment a snow-white swan is discovered swimming gracefully down the river.

M. Paul B. Du Chaillu, in his recent work, "A Journey to Ashango-Land; and further penetration into Equatorial Africa," gives two curious illustrations of the existence of a belief in men being sometimes transformed into beasts. He says,—

"I cannot avoid relating in this place a very curious instance of a strange and horrid form of monomania which is sometimes displayed by these primitive negroes. It was related to me so circumstantially by Akondogo, and so well confirmed by others, that I cannot help fully believing in all the principal facts of the case. Poor Akondogo said that he had had plenty of trouble in his day, that a leopard had killed two of his men, and that he had a great many palavers to settle on account of these deaths. Not knowing exactly what he meant, I said to him, 'Why did you not make a trap to catch the leopard?' To my astonishment, he replied, 'The leopard was not of the kind you mean. It was a man who had changed himself into a leopard, and then became a man again.' I said, 'Akondogo, I will never believe your story. How can a man be turned into a leopard?' He again asserted that it was true, and gave me the following history:—'Whilst he was in the woods with his people, gathering

india-rubber, one of his men disappeared, and, notwithstanding all their endeavours, nothing could be found of him but a quantity of blood. The next day another man disappeared, and in searching for him more blood was found. All the people got alarmed, and Akondogo sent for a great doctor to drink the mboundou, and solve the mystery of these two deaths. To the horror and astonishment of the old chief, the doctor declared it was Akondogo's own child (his nephew and heir), Akosho, who had killed the two men. Akosho was sent for, and, when asked by the chief, answered that it was truly he who had committed the murders; that he could not help it, for he had been turned into a leopard, and his heart longed for blood; and that after each deed he had turned into a man again. Akondogo loved his boy so much that he would not believe his own confession, until the boy took him to a place in the forest where lay the two bodies, one with the head cut off, and the other with the belly torn open. Upon this, Akondogo gave orders to seize the lad. He was bound with ropes, taken to the village, and then tied in a horizontal position to a post, and burnt slowly to death, all the people standing by until he expired.'

"I must say the end of the story seemed to me too horrible to listen to. I shuddered, and was ready to curse the race that was capable of committing such acts. But on careful enquiry, I found it was a case of monomania with the boy Akosho, and that he really was the murderer of the two men. It is probable that the superstitious belief of these morbidly imaginative Africans in the transformation of men into leopards, being early instilled into the minds of their children, is the direct cause of murders being committed under the influence of it. The boy himself, as well as Akondogo and all the people, believed he had really turned into a leopard, and the cruel punishment was partly in vengeance for witchcraft, and partly to prevent the committal of more crimes by the boy in a similar way, for, say they, the man has a spirit of witchcraft."

Again, after informing us that the Ashango people believed (not knowing that he was really wounded in his disastrous retreat from their country), that he, being "Oguisi," or "the spirit," was invulnerable, and that their poisoned arrows glanced from his body without doing him any injury, he further adds, that Magonga, one of his native guides, said "he had heard that at one time I had turned myself into a leopard, had hid myself in a tree, and had sprung upon the Mouaou people as they came to make war upon my men; that at other times I turned myself into a gorilla, or into

an elephant, and struck terror and death among the Mouaou and Mobana. Magongo finished his story by asking me for a 'war fetich,' for he said I must possess the art of making fetiches, or I and my men could not have escaped so miraculously."

It is necessary to remind the reader that Du Chaillu and others have failed to find any remains of ancient civilization on the western coast of Equatorial Africa, and that he expressly states his belief in the native tradition that the ancestors of the present tribes migrated from the east.

The Rev. G. W. Cox, in his "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," referring to the origin of Greek "Lykanthropy," says,—"The question to be answered is, whence came the notions that men were changed into wolves, bears, and birds, and not into lions, fishes, or reptiles; and to this question Comparative Mythology seems to me to furnish a complete answer; nor can I disavow my belief that this loathsome vampire superstition was in the first instance purely the result of a verbal equivocation which, as we have seen, has furnished so fruitful a source of myths." Mr. Cox regards the superstition to have originated in "that confusion between Leukos bright, as a general epithet, and the same word Lukos as a special name for the wolf, from which sprung first the myth of the transformation of Lycâôn, and then probably the widespread superstition of Lykanthropy."

Respecting the Eastern origin of this superstition, Kelly says,—"The were-wolf tradition has not been discovered with certainty amongst the Hindoos, but there is no European nation of Aryan descent in which it has not existed from time immemorial. Hence it is certain that the tradition itself, or the germs of it more or less developed, must have been brought by them all from Arya; and if Dr. Schwartz has not actually proved his case, he seems at least to have conjectured rightly in assigning, as one of these germs, the Aryan conception of the howling wind as a wolf. The Maruts and other beings who were busy in the storm assumed various shapes. The human form was proper to many or all of them, for they were identical with the Pitris or Fathers, and it would have been a very natural thought, when a storm broke out suddenly, that one or more of these people of the air had turned into wolves for the occasion. It was also a primæval notion that there were dogs and wolves amongst the dwellers in hell; and Weber, who has shown that this belief was entertained by the early Hindoos, is of opinion that these infernal animals were real were-wolves, that is to say, men upon whom such a transformation had been inflicted as a punishment."

The darkness of night is personified by the wolf in the folk-lore of the Teutonic nations. It is the Fenris of the Edda. In this sense the mythic wolf and "Little Red Riding Hood" are transparent enough. The ruddy glow of the evening sunlight is extinguished in the darkness of night. The Rev. G. W. Cox says that in one version of the story "Little Red Cap escapes his malice as Memnon rises again from Hades." This resurrection typifies the dawn springing from the darkness of the night on the following morning,

The Greek myth developed into the story that Zeus, when visiting Lycaon, was fed by his numerous sons with human flesh, and that he, in his anger at such treatment, turned them all into wolves. Similar transformations are frequent in the classical myths. Kirke turned the followers of Odysseus into swine, and Calisto was turned into a bear by the anger of Artemis.

This were-wolf, or man-wolf, myth, from the Anglo-Saxon *wer*, a man, has doubtless undergone much change and mutilation in its descent to modern times. The earlier Apollo of the Greeks, at the time of Homer even, was not the Sun-god he afterwards became. He was the "god of the summer storms," and, as such, he himself appeared in the form of a wolf. His mother, Latona, as Kelly observes, was regarded as "the dark storm-cloud, escorted at Jove's command by the Northwind," and she "came as a she-wolf from Lycia to the place where she was delivered of her twins. . . . In mythical language, Apollo was the son of Zeus; that is to say, he was Zeus in another form. The two gods were, in fact, like Indra and Rhudra, only different personifications of the same cycle of natural phenomena."

The Laureate, in his recent poem, "The Coming of Arthur," has the following beautiful poetic illustration of that which, no doubt, underlies much of the were-wolf superstitions:"—

> Thick with wet woods, and many a beast therein,
> And none or few to scare or chase the beast;
> So that wild dog and wolf and boar and bear
> Came night and day, and rooted in the fields,
> And wallow'd in the gardens of the king.
> And ever and anon the wolf would steal
> The children and devour, but now and then,
> Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce teat
> To human sucklings; and the children, housed
> In her foul den, there at their meal would growl,
> And mock their foster-mother on four feet,
> Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like men,
> Worse than the wolves.

CHAPTER XII.

SACRED AND OMINOUS BIRDS, ETC.

> The fatal cuckoo, on yon spreading tree,
> Hath sounded out your dying knell already.
> *Cowley.*

Amongst the various lightning birds of the Aryan mythology, some were regarded as portentous of evil; others, as the robin, the stork, and the woodpecker, on the contrary, were regarded with favour, and especially protected. The red breast of the robin, the red legs of the stork, and the red mutch of the woodpecker, were believed to result from their lightning origin. In Germany the robin is held in as much regard as it is in England. The Anglo-Saxon name, *Hrodhbeorht*, or *Hrodhbriht*, signifies flamebright, which was one of the appellations of Thor. In illustration of the reverence paid to the redbreast, a writer in "Notes and Queries" relates the following beautiful story, which he had from his nurse, a native of Cærmarthenshire:—

"Far, far away, is a land of woe, darkness, spirits of evil, and *fire*. Day by day does the little bird bear in his bill a drop of water to quench the flame. So near to the burning stream does he fly, that his dear little feathers are scorched; and hence he is named *Bronrhuddyn* (*i.e.*, breast-burned, or breast-scorched), To serve little children, the robin dares approach the infernal pit. No good child will hurt the devoted benefactor of man. The robin returns from the land of fire, and therefore he feels the cold of winter far more than his brother birds. He shivers in the brumal blast; hungry he chirps before your door. Oh! my child, then, in gratitude throw a few crumbs to poor redbreast."

I have not to this day forgotten the sense of shame and sorrow with which I was overwhelmed, when, as a boy, being permitted for the first time to discharge a fowling-piece at a small bird in a shrubbery, I discovered that the feathered songster whose life I had taken was a robin-redbreast.

The stork is, in Germany especially, ever a welcome guest, and wheels (sun emblems) are placed on the roofs of houses in Hesse, in

order to encourage the storks to build their nests thereupon. Their presence is supposed to render the building safe against the ravages of fire. Mannhardt mentions an instance in which, to avenge the abstraction of her young, it is said a stork carried a flaming brand in her beak, threw it into the nest, and thus set the house on fire. The German name for stork, Grimm says, is literally child or soul-bringer. Hence the belief that the advent of infants is presided over by this bird, which obtains so largely in Denmark and Germany.

Amongst the remains of birds and animals consumed as food by the framers of the Danish "kjökkenmöddings," or shell-mounds, the absence of the bones of the domestic fowl, two species of swallow, the sparrow and the stork, has been commented upon by several archæologists. This is attributable, doubtless, to the sacred character with which they were invested by the inhabitants of the district when the said mounds were formed. For a similar reason, as has been previously observed, no bones of the hare have been found in these ancient "kitchen-middens."

Amongst the birds of evil omen, the owl appears to rank with the foremost. Bourne says, "If an owl, which is reckoned a most abominable and unlucky bird, send forth its hoarse and dismal voice, it is an omen of the approach of some terrible thing; that some dire calamity and some great misfortune is near at hand." Chaucer speaks of the "owl eke that of deth the bode bringeth." Amongst the Romans its appearance was regarded as a most certain portent of death. In the year 312, on the day on which Constantine saw the vision of the cross in the heavens, with the legend "In hoc signo vinces," Zosimus, the pagan historian, informs us that his opponent, Maxentius, was disconcerted by the adverse portent of a flight of owls. Speaking of the prodigies which were said to accompany the passing away of Augustus Cæsar, Xiphilinus says that an "owl sung on the top of the Curia." Our Elizabethan and later poets often refer to this superstition. In one of Reed's old plays we have :—

> When screech owls croak upon the chimney tops,
> It's certain then you of a corse shall hear.

Spencer speaks of "the ill-fac'd owl, death's dreadful messenger," and Pennant, when describing what is called the tawny owl, says, "this is what we call the screech owl, to which the folly of superstition had given the power of presaging death by its cries." Shakspere makes Lennox say, on the night of the murder of Duncan, that—

> The obscure bird
> Clamoured the livelong night.

Puck, in Midsummer Night's Dream, says,—

Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf be-howls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the scritch-owl, scritching loud,
Puts the wretch, that lies in woe,
In remembrance of a shroud.

Referring to the advent of the Duke of Gloucester, afterwards King Richard III., King Henry says:—

The owl shriek'd at thy birth; an evil sign!
The night crow cry'd, aboding luckless time;
Dogs howled, and hideous tempests shook down trees.

And again, in Julius Cæsar, on the night of the murder of the great dictator, Casca, amongst the numerous other prodigies which he witnessed says:—

And yesterday the bird of night did sit,
Even at noon-day, upon the market place,
Hooting and shrieking.

The rejoinder put into the mouth of Cicero, shows that Shakspere, while he appreciated the dramatic value of the "folk-lore" of superstitious people like the terrified Casca, was fully alive to the folly of the popular interpretation of the phenomena referred to, He says:

Indeed, it is a strange-dispos'd time;
But men may construe things after their fashion
Clean from the purpose of the things themselves.

This is still more markedly indicated in the dialogue between Hotspur and Owen Glendower, in the first part of King Henry IV.:—

Glendower: At my nativity
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
Of burning cressets; and at my birth
The frame and huge foundation of the earth
Shaked like a coward.
Hotspur: Why, so it would have done
At the same season, if your mother's cat
Had but kittened, though yourself had ne'er been born.
Glendower: I say the earth did shake when I was born.
Hotspur: And I say the earth was not of my mind,
If you suppose as fearing you it shook.
Glendower: The heavens were all on fire, the earth did tremble.
Hotspur: O, then the earth shook to see the heavens on fire,
And not in fear of your nativity.
Diseased nature often times breaks forth
In strange eruptions: oft the teeming earth
Is with a kind of cholic pinched and vexed,

By the imprisoning of unruly wind
Within her womb ; which for enlargement striving,
Shakes the old beldam earth, and topples down
Steeples and moss-grown towers.

In the Greek mythology the owl was the symbol of Athenê. Hence, as before observed, she was styled "Glaucopis," or owl-eyed. According to Payne Knight, this symbol was adopted for the wise goddess because the owl was "a bird which seems to surpass all other creatures in acuteness of organic perception, its eye being calculated to observe objects which to all others are enveloped in darkness, its ear to hear sounds distinctly, and its nostrils to discriminate effluvia with such nicety that it has been deemed prophetic, from discovering the putridity of death even in the first stages of disease." As in the case of the dog, referred to in Chapter IX., it is by no means improbable that the extremely delicate sense of smell possessed by the owl, lies at the root of this superstition. Its after development into a prophetic power respecting approaching death, even without previous disease, can easily be understood, after the original physical conditions had entered into the mythical realm of legend and superstition.

The cuckoo is generally regarded, like the owl and the raven, as a bird of ill omen. According to Mannhardt, on first hearing its note, the German peasant rolls himself on the grass, as he does when he hears thunder. The observance of this ceremony is supposed to insure to the individual freedom from aches and pains during the year. It is considered to be unlucky to hear the cuckoo for the first time without coin in the pocket. The more fortunate peasants yet instinctively turn over their money to insure "luck" on first hearing this bird's cry.

The old English rhyme is well known in Lancashire :—

Cuckoo, cherry tree,
Good bird tell me,
How many years have I to live.

In some places there is a triple rhyme, the last line reading thus:

How many years before I dee? (die).

I remember well indulging in my youth, with other boys, in the divination described by Sir Henry Ellis, as follows:—"Easy to foretel what sort of summer it would be by the position in which the larva of *Cicada (Aphrophora) spumaria* was found to lie in the froth *(cuckoo-spit)* in which it is enveloped. If the insect lay with its head upwards, it infallibly denoted a dry summer ; if downwards, a wet one." The said spume was fully believed to have been deposited upon the vegetation by the expectoration of the cuckoo.

Cuckoos are believed to become sparrowhawks in winter. The Rev. H. B. Fristram, at a recent meeting of the British Association, held at Newcastle-on-Tyne, stated when he once remonstrated with a man for shooting a cuckoo, "the defence was that it was well known that *sparrowhawkes turned into cuckoos* in the summer." Grimm states that in Germany, after St. John's day, about the time when it becomes mute, the cuckoo is believed to change into a hawk. Referring to these facts, Kelly pertinently asks, as "the form of the cuckoo remotely resembles that of the falcon tribe, may we hazard a conjecture that hence, in German tradition, that bird in some degree represents the fire-bringing falcon of the Aryans?" Mannhardt says, "The cuckoo is the messenger of Thor, the god in whose gift were health and strength, length of days, and marriage blessings, and therefore it is that people call upon the bird to tell how long they have to live, how soon they will be married, and how many children they shall have; and that in Schaumberg the person who acts at a wedding as master of the ceremonies carries a cuckoo on his staff."

Kelly says:—"The cuckoo's connection with storms and tempests is not clearly determined, but the owl's is indisputable. Its cry is believed in England to foretell rain and hail, the latter of which is usually accompanied with lightning, and the practice of nailing it to the barn door, to avert the lightning, is common throughout Europe, and is mentioned by Palladius in his treatise on agriculture."

The wren, as I have shown in a previous chapter, is mercilessly hunted to death in the Isle of Man, although he partakes of the sanctity of the robin in most parts of England. Not so in Ireland, however. General Vallancy says:—"The Druids represented this as the king of all birds. The superstitious respect shown to this little bird gave offence to our first Christian missionaries, and by their commands he is still hunted and killed on Christmas-day; and on the following (St. Stephen's-day) he is carried about hung by the leg in the centre of two hoops crossing each other at right angles, and a procession is made in every village, of men, women, and children, singing an Irish catch importing him to be the king of all birds."

The wren is sometimes treated in a similar manner in the south of France. It is generally, however, regarded as a sacred bird, as in England and Scotland. To take its life or to rob its nest even, in the Pays de Caux, is regarded as a crime of such atrocity that it will "*bring down the lightning*" upon the homestead of the offender. Robert Chambers, in his "Popular Rhymes," has the following couplet on this subject:—

Malisons, malisons, mair than ten,
That harry the Ladye of Heaven's hen!

It would seem from these facts that the poor little bird has met with a somewhat similar fate to that of Odin and the rest of the Æsir gods, and has been transformed, occasionally at least, into a spirit of evil.

In Perigord, according to De Nore, the swallow is called "*La Poule de Dieu*," and is regarded as "the messenger of life." The cricket, too, is held in similar estimation. May not the latter have acquired its reputation from its fondness of the domestic hearth, and its presumed immunity from the effects of fire?

The raven, sacred to Odin and Apollo, the German and Greek forms of the Aryan Rudra, was, and indeed is yet, pre-eminently the bird of ill-omen. Lady Macbeth, in the fulness of her murderous impulse, exclaims :—

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements.

And Hamlet, impatient at the grimaces of the actor, representing, in the play, the murderer of his father, exclaims :—

Leave thy damnable faces and begin. Come—
The croaking raven
Doth bellow for revenge.

And, again, Othello says :—

Oh, it comes o'er my memory
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,
Boding to all.

All know what powerful use Edgar Allan Poe has made of this "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore," in his marvellous poem, "The Raven."

The raven's power of scenting carrion from a great distance may have originally influenced, as in the case of the dog and owl, its selection as a personification of impending death or other calamity.

The raven was the standard of the Scandinavian vikingrs, as the eagle was of the Ancient Romans, and is of the French of the present day. Asser, in his "Life of Alfred the Great," when describing a victory gained by that king near Kynwith Castle says: "they gained a very large booty, and among other things the standard called Raven; for they say that the three sisters of Hindwai and Hubba, daughters of Lodobroch, wove that flag and got it ready in one day. They say, moreover, that in every battle, wherever that flag went before them, if they were to gain the victory, a live crow would

appear flying in the middle of the flag; but if they were doomed to be defeated it would hang down motionless, and this was often proved to be so." Doubtless much of the still lingering aversion for crows, ravens, and magpies, is but the remains of the dislike of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors to the emblem of their once dreaded mortal enemies, or it is, perhaps, more probable that each people had preserved a similar traditionary faith in the supernatural character of the bird from their common remote ancestors. Indeed, reference is made to the raven as a war emblem in the fragment of heroic Anglo-Saxon poetry, containing part of a description of the battle at Finnesburg, which was found on the cover of a MS. of homilies, in the library at Lambeth Palace, by Dr. Hicks, in the sixteenth century. On the defeat of the warriors, the MS. says,—"The raven wandered, swart and sallow brown." There is, as I have previously observed, in Chapter IX., a tradition in Cornwall that King Arthur is yet alive in the form of a raven, and superstitious persons yet refuse to kill the bird from a belief in its truth.

Many other birds possess somewhat similar attributes to the raven, such as crows, magpies, jackdaws, &c. Ramesey (Elminthologia, 1668) says:—"If a crow fly but over the house and croak thrice, how do they fear, they, or some one else in the family, shall die." The croaking of crows and ravens foreboded rain. In this particular they resembled the woodpecker. It was, nay, it is yet held that to see a crow on the left hand is a sinister omen. In the "Defensative against the Poyson of supposed Prophesies," by the Earl of Northampton, published in 1583, we find the following:—"The flight of many crowes upon the left side of the campe made the Romans very much afrayde of some badde lucke; as if the greate god Jupiter had nothing else to do (said Carneades) but to drive jack-dawes in a flock together."

The evil boding of the "seven whistlers," or flock of plovers, in Lancashire, has been previously referred to. In Lancashire and the north of England magpies are termed pyanots. The old formula, which attributes certain results as the consequence of their appearance, is still firmly believed in, viz.:—"One for sorrow, two for mirth, three for a wedding and four for death." Intelligent persons, yet, from mere habit, on the sight of a magpie, involuntary turn round three times, or mark a cross with the toe on the ground, in order to avert the calamity supposed to be attendant upon its untoward presence. The original name, when fully expressed, appears to have been maggott pie. Shakspere

mentions it under this designation, when, in Macbeth, he refers to its use in divination. He says :—

> Augurs and understood relations have
> By maggot pies, and choughs, and rooks, brought forth
> The secret'st man of blood.

The woodpecker, perhaps, of all the fire-bringing birds, has most permeated the ancient mythologies. The Latins named it Picus, whose brother (or double), Pilumnus, was the god of bakers and millers. In early times the millers pounded their corn with a pestle, and *pilum* signified both pestle and javelin, which are equally types of the thunderbolt. The tapping of the beak of the woodpecker was regarded as partaking of a similar character. On the birth of a child it was customary at Rome to prepare a couch for Pilumnus and Picumnus, who were believed to bring the fire of life, and were supposed to remain until the vitality of the infant was indisputable. The Romans likewise styled the woodpecker Martus and Feronius, from the god Mars and the Sabine goddess Feronia. The name Feronia is indicative of fire or soul bringing, and is intimately connected with that of Phoroneus, the Prometheus of a Peloponessian legend, relating to the original procuration of the heavenly fire. Dr. Kuhn says both names are identical with the epithet commonly applied to the Aryan fire-god Agni, *Churanyu*, which signifies "one who pounces down, or bears down rapidly."

Picus was the son of Saturn, and the first King of Latium, as well as a fire-bringing bird. This, Kelly observes, "is only another way of saying that he, too, like Manu, Minyas, Minos, Phoroneus, and other fire-bringers, is the first man; and therefore it is that, under the name of Picumnus, he continued in latter times to be the guardian genius of children, along with his brother Pilumnus."

A remarkable coincidence between the Anglo-Saxon pedigree of Odin, which makes Beav, or Beovolf, one of his ancestors, and the story of the first King of Latium, is noticed by Grimm. Beewolf—that is, bee-eater—is the German name for the woodpecker.

Many other birds were believed to forecast the weather, such as the barn door fowl, the stormy petril, the heron, and the crane, all of which appear but to be modifications of the Aryan lightning birds so often referred to. In the Greek version of the myth, the raven represents the dark cloud. Originally, however, the cloud referred to was white; but Apollo, having sent his favourite bird to the fountain for water, was imposed upon by the feathered idler and glutton; he, therefore, turned his plumage black, and condemned him as a

punishment to a continuous croaking for water to quench his thirst.

Amongst insects, the lady-bird appears to have been a fire-bringer, and is yet much in vogue in matters of augury. Gay says :—

> This lady-fly I take from off the grass,
> Whose spotted back might scarlet red surpass.
> Fly lady-bird, north, south, or east or west,
> Fly where the man is found that I love best.

I know not whether the dandelion can be classed among the lightning plants, but I remember well the blowing away of its ripened winged seeds with the view to ascertain the time of the day, as well as to solve much more profound mysteries.

In the "Athenium Oracle" the following curious rejoinder appears to the query:—"Why rats, toads, ravens, screech owls, are ominous; and how they came to foreknow fatal events?" The writer replies: "Had the querist said unlucky instead of ominous he might easily have met with satisfaction; a rat is so because it destroys many a Cheshire cheese, &c. A toad is unlucky because it poisons." [This is now known to be erroneous.] "As for ravens and screech owls, they are just as unlucky as cats, when about their courtship, because they make an ugly noise, which disturbes their neighbourhood. The instinct of rats leaving an old ship is because they cannot be dry in it, and an old house because, perhaps, they want victuals. A raven is much such a prophet as our conjurors or almanac makers, foretelling events after they are come to pass: they follow great armies, as vultures, not as foreboding battle, but for the dead men, dogs, horses, &c., which, especially in a march, must be daily left behind them. But the foolish observations made on their croaking before death, etc., are for the most part pure humour, and have no grounds besides foolish tradition or a sickly imagination." Old Reginald Scot, as early as the sixteenth century, stoutly contended "that to prognosticate that guests approach to your house on the chattering of pies or haggisters, [a Kentish term for magpie,] is altogether vanity and superstition."

The *Shipping Gazette*, in April, 1869, contained a communication entitled "A Sailor's Notion about Rats," in which the following passage occurs:—"It is a well authenticated fact that rats have often been known to leave ships in the harbour previous to their being lost at sea. Some of those wiseacres who want to convince us *against the evidence of our senses* will call this superstition. As neither I have time, nor you space, to cavil with such at present, I shall leave them alone in their glory." It is difficult to decide whether the supersti-

tion, the bad logic, or the self-sufficiency of the writer of this sentence most predominates. It is a pity he did not edify the "wiseacres" as to how "the evidence of our senses" could by any possibility bring us in contact with the motive of rats, with whom we have had no intercourse either of a mental or moral kind. But perhaps the said "Shipmaster" has, after taking rats into his council, rejected their advice, and lost his bark in consequence. Truly it is a difficult matter to determine where abject superstition ends and ordinary credulity begins. The fact that rats do sometimes migrate from one ship to another, or from one barn or corn stack to another, from various causes, ought to be quite sufficient to explain such "evidence of our senses" as informs us that "rats have often been known to leave ships in harbour *previous* to their being lost at sea." If they left the ship at all *in harbour*, it, of necessity must have been *before* the vessel was lost at sea. The error lies in the assertion, without the slightest "evidence of our senses" to support it, that sailor rats are genuine Zadkiels, and can peep into futurity by the aid of some supernatural power denied to mariners of the genus *homo*.

This superstition, nevertheless, is evidently one of considerable antiquity. Shakspere refers to it in the Tempest. Prospero, describing the vessel in which himself and daughter had been placed with the view to their certain destruction at sea says :—

> They hurried us aboard a bark ;
> Bore us some leagues to sea ; where they prepared
> A rotten carcase of a boat, not rigged,
> Nor tackle, sail, nor mast ; the very rats
> Instinctively had quit it.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DIVINING OR "WISH"-ROD, AND SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING TREES AND PLANTS.

Some sorcerers do boast they have a rod
Gather'd with vowes and sacrifice,
And (borne about) will strangely nod
To hidden treasure, where it lies;
Mankind is (sure) that rod divine,
For to the *wealthiest ever they incline!*
S. Sheppard, 1651.

Faith in the power of the "wish" or "divining rod" is by no means extinct in the North of England. In modern times it is chiefly believed to be potent in the detection of metallic veins, hidden treasure, or subterranean springs of water. Our ancestors, however, held that this mystic instrument was endowed with the faculty of bringing "luck" or good fortune to its possessor, and of causing his slightest wish or desire to receive fulfilment. I have a faint recollection of a story relative to the use of the divining rod, with the view to ascertain the locality of the "buried treasure," since discovered, in the valley of the Ribble, near Preston, and now known as the celebrated "Cuerdale hoard." This treasure, in all human probability, was consigned to the earth immediately after the famous battle of Brunanburh, in the earlier portion of the tenth century. Although it remained undisturbed about nine hundred years, a tradition survived, which asserted that the place of the deposit could be seen from the promontory overlooking the valley on which Walton, or "Law," Church is situated. The late Mr. B. F. Allen, of Preston, remembered a farmer ploughing deeply the whole of an extensive field in the neighbourhood, in the hope of discovering the long-lost treasure, some professor of the art of divination by the "wish rod" having pronounced in favour of the probability of a successful result. Singularly enough, even after the accidental discovery of the treasure chest of the days of Athelstan, the country people of the neighbourhood still nursed the memory of the tradition with great fondness, firmly believing that the "find" referred to was but a foretaste of what was to come. I was forcibly struck with the tenacity of this

species of tradition, when engaged digging on the site of the Roman station at the junction of the Darwen and the Ribble, in 1855. The turning up of a few scattered brass coins of the higher empire, led to a rumour that we had come upon "th' buried goud" at last, and caused us some inconvenience. The Cuerdale hoard, it must be remembered, consisted entirely of coins, marks, and bracelets and other ornaments *in silver*. Mr. Martland, who farmed the land at the time, told me some curious stories respecting this mound at Walton-le-Dale, which would indicate that treasure-seekers had been more than once practising their vocation in the neighbourhood. Some thirteen or fourteen years previously, a hole nine or ten feet long was dug in one night by some unknown persons. A silver coin (most probably Roman) was found on the filling up of the trench. Mr. Martland likewise remembered hearing of a somewhat similar hole having been excavated between forty or fifty years previously, under equally mysterious circumstances, and not far from the same spot. The locality was watched every evening for a fortnight, before the hole was filled up, with the view to ascertain whether the midnight excavators would resume their labours. Nothing was discovered which either identified the parties or explained their object. The general impression, however, was that they were treasure hunters, and that they had acted under some magical or supernatural direction.

In a manuscript of the early part of the seventeenth century, by John Bell, the necessary formulæ for the procuration and preparation of the divining rod are thus described :—

"When you find in the wood or elsewhere, on old walls or on high hills or rocks, a rowan which has grown out of a berry let fall from a bird's bill, you must go at twilight in the evening of the third day after our Lady's day, and either uproot or break off the said rod or tree; but you must take care that neither iron or steel come nigh it, and that it do not fall to the ground on the way home. Then place the rod under the roof, at a spot under which you have laid sundry metals, and in a short time you will see with astonishment how the rod gradually bends under the roof towards the metals. When the rod has remained fourteen days or more in the same place, you take a knife or an awl which has been stroked with a magnet, and previously stuck through a great Frögroda (?), slit the bark on all sides, and pour or drop in cock's blood, especially such as is drawn from the comb of a cock of one colour; and when this blood has dried the rod is ready, and gives manifest proof of the efficacy of its wondrous nature."

The same writer referring to the subject of rabdomanteia or rod divination, relates the following, on the authority of Theophylact:—"They set up two staffs, and having whispered some verses and incantations, the staffs fell by the operations of dæmons. Then they considered which way each of them fell, forward or backward, to the right or left hand, and agreeably gave responses, having made use of the fall of their staffs for their signs."

This superstition appears to have been very prevalent in the earliest times. The divination of the Chaldeans has passed into a proverb. Ezekiel refers to it, and Hosea denounces the Jews for their faith in such heathen ceremonies. He exclaims—"My people ask counsel at their stocks, and *their staff* declareth unto them." It was practised by the Alani, according to Herodotus, and we have the authority of Tacitus for the estimation in which it was held by the ancient Germanic tribes.

Sir Henry Ellis refers to an effort by miners to discover a metallic lode, by means of the divining rod, as recently as 1842. He thus describes the experiment:—"The method of procedure was to cut the twig of a hazel or an apple tree, of twelve months' growth, into a forked shape, and to hold this by both hands in a peculiar way, walking across the land until the twig bent, which was taken as an indication of the locality of a lode. The person who generally practices this divination boasts himself to be the seventh son of a seventh son. The twig of hazel bends in his hands to the conviction of the miners that ore is present; but then the peculiar manner in which the twig is held, bringing muscular action to bear upon it, accounts for its gradual deflection, and the circumstance of the strata walked over always containing ore, gives a further credit to the process of divination."

The following curious anecdote, referring to this subject, appears in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1752:—"M. Linnæus, when he was upon his voyage to Scania, hearing his secretary highly extol the virtues of his divining wand, was willing to convince him of its insufficiency, and for that purpose concealed a purse of one hundred ducats under a ranunculus which grew by itself in a meadow, and bid the secretary find it if he could. The wand discovered nothing, and M. Linnæus's mark was soon trampled down by the company who were present; so that when M. Linnæus went to finish the experiment by fetching the gold himself, he was utterly at a loss where to seek it. The man with the wand assisted him, and pronounced it could not lie the way they were going, but quite the contrary, so pursued the direction of his wand, and actually dug out the gold. M. Linnæus

adds that such another experiment would be sufficient to make a proselyte of him." Lilly relates an effort of his to discover hidden treasure by the divining rod. He, however, frankly confesses that he failed in his object.

The divining rod in form resembled the letter Y, and, independently of its other magical qualities, owed some of its supposed power to its form and the number of its limbs. The peculiar and regular equiangular form of the branches of the mistletoe, doubtless, had much influence in its selection as a mystical plant endowed with supernatural properties. The number three, and its multiple nine, together with the mystic Abracadabra, the double triangle of the Gnostics, have been regarded from the most remote ages as of mystical import. The association of the "seventh son of a seventh son" (another mystic number) with the procedure, is likewise indicative of a mathematical element at the root of this superstition.

Mr. Gladstone, in his "Juventus Mundi," says,—"With respect to the Trident" (of Poseidon or Neptune), "an instrument so unsuited to water, it appears evidently to point to some tradition of a Trinity, such as may still be found in various forms of Eastern religion, other than the Hebrew. It may have proceeded, among the Phœnicians, from the common source of an older tradition; and this seems more probable than its direct derivation from the Hebrews, with whom, however, we know that the Phœnicians had intercourse."

The horseshoe, which is so frequently seen nailed to stable and shippon doors, as a charm against the machinations of witches, is said to owe its virtue chiefly to its shape. Any other object presenting two points or forks, even the spreading out of the two fore-fingers, is said to possess similar occult power, though not in so high a degree as the rowan wish-rod. In Spain and Italy forked pieces of coral are in high repute as witch scarers. A crescent formed of two boar's tusks is frequently appended to the necks of mules, to protect the animals from witchcraft. The boar's tusk I have previously shown to be an Aryan lightning emblem.

Kelly is of opinion that the mandrake, on account of its form and supposed lightning origin, possessed, in common with the wish-rod, the power of conferring good fortune on its possessor. The root of the mandrake is believed to bear some resemblance to a human being, and appears to have been used in England by sorcerers as an image of the victim operated upon, as well as figures made of clay or wax. In his "Art of Simpling," Coles says that witches "take likewise the roots of the mandrake, according to some, or, as I rather suppose,

the roots of briony, which simple folke take for the true mandrake, and make thereof an ugly image, by which they represent the person on whom they intend to exercise their witchcraft." He adds—"Some plants have roots with a number of threads, like beards, as mandrakes, whereof witches and imposters make an ugly image, giving it the form of a face at the top of the root, and leave those strings to make a broad beard down to the feet." Dr. Kuhn and others are of opinion that the form of the wish-rod originated in a somewhat similar idea; or rather that the two superstitions had, in this respect, a common origin. It appears that these rods are yet dressed like dolls in some parts of Germany, and that they are occasionally attached to the body of a child about to be christened. Schönwerth informs us that in the Oberpfalz the newly-cut wish-rod is formally baptised, and the sign of the cross made over it three times by the operator. Kelly adds—"This is not all. In every instance the divining or wish rod has a forked end. This is an essential point, as all authorities agree in declaring. Now a forked rod (or a 'forked raddish') is the simplest possible image of the human figure."

The English mandrake, used by witches and treasure hunters, is, as Coles observes, the *briony*, the veritable *atropa mandragora* not being found in the northern portion of the continent of Europe. It flourishes luxuriantly in the Grecian islands. Mr. John Ingram, in his "Flora Symbolica," says the mandragora is "the emblem of *rarity*." He adds,—"Amongst the Oriental races the mandrake, probably on account of its fœtid odour and venomous properties, is regarded with intense abhorrence; the Arabs, Richardson says, call it 'the devil's candle,' because of its shiny appearance in the night; a circumstance thus alluded to by Moore in his 'Lalla Rookh':—

> Such rank and deadly lustre dwells,
> As in those hellish fires that light
> The mandrake's charmed leaves at night.

"There is an old, deeply-rooted superstition connected with this ominous plant, which we have reason to believe is not yet altogether eradicated from the minds of the uneducated, that the mandrake grows up under the gallows, being nourished by the exhalations from executed criminals; and that when it is pulled out of the ground it utters lamentable cries, as if possessed of sensibility:

> The phantom shapes – oh, touch them not –
> That appal the murderer's sight,
> Lurk in the fleshy mandrake's stem,
> That shrieks when pluck'd at night.

So says Moore in verse, only repeating what many have said gravely in prose.

"Another terrible quality imputed to this wretched plant was that the person pulling it out of the ground would be seriously injured by its pestilential effects, some even averring that death speedily resulted from them; in order therefore to guard against this danger, the surrounding soil was removed, and the plant fastened securely to a dog, so that when the animal was driven away he drew up the root, and paid the penalty of the deed."

Dr. Kuhn contends that this human form was given to the mandrake and the wish rod because both were believed to be of divine or supernatural origin, and represented a species of demi-god, of the lightning tribe. Kelly contends that "a comparison with ancient Hindoo usages fully confirms the truth of this conclusion. The human form is expressly attributed in the Rig Veda and other Sanscrit books to the pieces of asvattha wood used for kindling sacred fire—so many inches for the head and neck, so many for the upper and lower parts of the trunk, the thighs and legs respectively—and the operator is warned to be very careful where he churns, for perdition will issue from most parts of the arani, whereas he who churns in the right spot will obtain fruition of all his wishes; he will gain wealth, cattle, sons, heaven, long life, love, and good fortune. Evidently the tabular part or block of the chark is equivalent to the wish-rod, and the reason of this is that they are both embodiments of the lightning."

Doubtless, as has been contended by Dr. Kuhn and many others, the caduceus or rod of Hermes may be referred to a similar origin; that it is, in fact, but the Greek development of the original Aryan myth. The wands of conjurers, the batons of military commanders, and even the sceptres of monarchs, together with Neptune's trident and Jove's thundering implement, may without extravagance be assigned to a similar origin.

The divining rod was made either of hazel, the rowan or mountain ash, or some other of the European representatives of either the palasa tree, or the "imperial *mimosa* of the East." The story of the origin of these trees, as related in the Veda, is somewhat curious. It exhibits the root of the superstitious reverence, so common amongst all the Aryan tribes, in which certain trees and plants are held, and of the belief in their medical and magical properties. It appears that the demons had stolen the heavenly soma, or drink of the gods, and cellared it in some mythical rock or cloud. The falcon (a lightning

bird) undertook to restore to the thirsty deities their much prized liquor. The feathered hero triumphed, but he gained his honours at the expense of a claw and a plume, of which an arrow from one of "the enemy" deprived him during his retreat. Both fell to the earth and took root. From the feather sprung the parna or palasa tree, which possessed red sap and bore scarlet blossoms. From the claw a species of thorn was developed. This Dr. Kuhn contends is the *Mimosa catechu*, or the "imperial *mimosa*" referred to. The falcon being regarded as a lightning god, the plants and trees sprung from him were supposed to possess largely the divine attributes of their progenitor. The Aryan tribes, on migrating into distant lands, found, of course, that the botanical characteristics of their new homes differed from those pertaining to that they had left. They, therefore, selected what, to them, appeared the nearest representatives of the *parna* and the *mimosa*, and endowed them with their supernatural properties. Amongst the most reverenced in Europe were the fern, which appears to be but a modern form of the word *parna*; the mountain ash, or rowan; the hazel, and the black and white thorn, and the spring-wort or St. John's-wort. Kelly says:—"Among the many English names of the mountain ash are witchen tree, witch elm, witch hazel, witch wood; quicken tree, quick beam (*quick*—alive, *beam*, German *baum*—tree); roan tree, roun tree, rowan. These last three synonymes are from the Norse tongues, and denote, as Grimm conjectures, the runic or mysterious and magic character of the tree."

Several peculiarities of the mountain ash correspond with others which characterise the Hindoo palasa. Both bear red berries, and their leaves are profusely luxuriant. These characteristics are supposed to correspond to the blood shed by the falcon and the form of his lost feather. The spikes of the thorn, by a similar process of reasoning, are identified with the claw detached by the arrow of the pursuing demon.

The late Bishop Heber, referring to the mimosa of India, relates facts which clearly identify some of the superstitions of the East with others in Britain. He appears likewise to have anticipated that time would disclose their common origin. He says:—"Near Boitpoor, in Upper India, I passed a fine tree of the mimosa genus, with leaves, at a little distance, so much resembling those of the mountain ash, that I was for a moment deceived, and asked if it did not bring fruit. They answered no; but that it was a very noble tree, being called the imperial tree, for its excellent properties; that it slept all night, and awakened and was alive all day, withdrawing its leaves if

anyone attempted to touch them. Above all, however, it was useful as a preservative against magic. A sprig worn in the turban, or suspended over the bed, was a perfect security against all spells, evil eye, etc.; inasmuch as the most formidable wizard would not, if he could help it, approach its shade. One indeed, they said, who was very renowned for his power, (like Lorinite, in the Kehama,) of killing plants and drying up their sap with a look, had come to this very tree and gazed on it intently; but, said the old man, who told me this with an air of triumph, look as he might, he could do the tree no harm. I was amazed and surprised to find the superstition which in England and Scotland attaches to the rowan tree here applied to a tree of nearly similar form. What nation has in this been the imitator? *Or from what common centre are these common notions derived?*"

M. Du Chaillu, in his second journey to Western Equatorial Africa, found a similar superstitious reverence for certain trees amongst the negro inhabitants. He says:—"At an Ishogo village named Diamba, which we passed about two o'clock, I saw two heads of the gorilla (male and female) stuck on two poles placed under the village tree in the middle of the street. In explanation of this I may mention here that in almost every Ishogo and Ashango village which I visited there was a large tree standing about the middle of the main street, and near the mbuiti or idol-house of the village. The tree is a kind of Ficus, with large, thick, and glossy leaves. It is planted a sapling when the village is first built, and is considered to bring good luck to the inhabitants as a talisman. If the sapling lives, the villagers consider the omen a good one; but if it dies, they all abandon the place and found a new village elsewhere. This tree grows rapidly, and soon forms a conspicuous object, with its broad crown yielding a pleasant shade in the middle of the street. Fetiches, similar to those I have described in the account of Rabolo's village, on the Fernand Vaz, are buried at the foot of the tree; and the gorillas' heads on poles at Diamba were no doubt placed there as some sort of fetich. The tree, of course, is held sacred. An additional charm is lent to these village trees by the great number of little social birds (*Sycobius*, three species) which resort to them to build their nests amongst the foliage. These charming little birds love the society of man as well as that of their own species. They associate in these trees, sometimes in incredible quantities, and the noise they make with their chirping, chatting, and fuss in building their nests and feeding their young is often greater even than that made by the negroes of the village."

The *Caledonian Mercury*, a very few years ago, published the following paragraph, which clearly demonstrates that the superstitious reverence for the mountain ash still exists in a most unmistakable manner in North Britain :—

"*Superstition in Strathearn.*—It is not many years ago since two women were seen pulling the tether in a field a few miles from Crieff, with what object everyone knows. Even more recently a Crieff merchant, who had adopted the motto "Pay to-day and trust to-morrow," had a piece of rowan tree suspended over his doorway, and after his death a bit of the same wood was found in each of his pockets as a preventive against the power of witches. At this moment an honest farmer in a neighbouring parish has a branch of the rowan tree above his byres, and it is said that every stranger who enters his gates passes under this magic wood."

The author of "Sylvan Sketches," (1825), informs us, on the authority of Lightfoot, that "in the Highlands of Scotland, at the birth of an infant, the nurse takes a green stick of ash, one end of which she puts into the fire, and while it is burning receives in a spoon the sap that ooses from the other, which she administers to the child as its first food." The infant Zeus, of the Greeks, was first fed by the Melian nymphs with honey "the fruit of the ash," and with goat's milk. Kelly says :—

"There was a positive, as well as a mythic, reason why the Greeks should give the ash a name signifying sweetness, because the *Fraxinus ornus*, a species of ash indigenous in the south of Europe, yields manna from its slit bark. They may also have conceived that honey dropped upon the earth as dew from the heavenly ash, for Theophrastus mentions a kind of honey which fell in that form from the air, and which was therefore called *aeromelia*."

Weber and Dr. Kuhn refer to a passage in one of the sacred books of the Hindoos, in which an analogous practice is referred to. It reads, "The father puts his mouth to the right ear of the new-born babe, and murmurs three times, 'Speech! speech!' Then he gives it a name, 'Thou art Veda;' that is its secret name. Then he mixes clotted milk, honey, and butter, and feeds the babe with it out of pure gold." Referring to this subject, Kelly exclaims :—

"Amazing toughness of popular tradition! Some thousands of years ago the ancestors of this Highland nurse had known the *Fraxinus ornus* in Arya, or on their long journey through Persia, Asia Minor, and the south of Europe, and they had given its honey-like juice as divine food to their children; and now their descendant,

imitating their practice in the cold North, but totally ignorant of its true meaning, puts the nauseous sap of her native ash into the mouth of her hapless charge, because her mother, and her grandmother, and her grandmother's mother had done the same thing before her. 'The reason,' we are told by a modern native authority, 'for giving ash-sap to new born children in the Highlands of Scotland, is, first, because it acts as a powerful astringent; and secondly, because the ash, in common with the rowan, is supposed to possess the property of resisting the attacks of witches, fairies, and other imps of darkness.'" Mr. Kelly regards the astringent argument as evidently not the reason why the practice was first adopted, but an excuse, and a bad one, for its continuance. In many places mothers yet pass their infants through split ash trees in the belief that it will cure them of, or protect them from, the rickets or rupture.

Brand regards the Christian pastoral crook, as well as the "lituus or staff with the crook at one end, which the augurs of old carried as badges of their profession, and instruments in the superstitious exercise of it," as originally intimately connected with the divining rod. He refers to Hogarth's "Analysis of Beauty," in which the great satirical artist gives an engraving of what he terms a "*lusus naturæ*," which represents a "very elegant" branch of the ash tree. Brand seems to endorse Mr. Gostling's opinion, as expressed in the "Antiquarian Repertory," who says, "I should rather style it a distemper or distortion of nature; for it seems the effect of a wound by some insect, which, piercing to the heart of the plant with its proboscis, poisons that, while the bark remains uninjured and proceeds in its growth, but formed into various stripes, flatness, and curves, for want of the support which nature designed it. The beauty some of these arrive at might well consecrate them to the fopperies of heathenism, and their rarity occasions imitations of them by art. The pastoral staff of the Church of Rome seems to have been formed from the vegetable litui, though the general idea is, I know, that it is an imitation of the shepherd's crook." Gostling's paper is accompanied by engravings of "carved branches of the ash." Brand speaks of one of these curious "freaks of nature," which he saw in the possession of an old woman at Beeralstown, in Devonshire, as "extremely beautiful." He was very anxious to purchase it, but the old lady refused to "part with it on any account, thinking it would be unlucky to do so."

Several modern writers on comparative mythology class the wish or divining rod amongst the numerous forms which the stauros, as a

phallic emblem, has presented itself. The Rev. G. W. Cox, in his "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," is very explicit on this point. He says,—"The wooden emblem carries us, however, more directly to the natural mythology of the subject. The rod acquired an inherent vitality, and put forth leaves and branches in the Thyrsoi of the Dionysiac worshippers and the Seistron of Egyptian priests. It became the tree of life, and reappeared as the rod of wealth and happiness given by Apollôn to Hermes, the mystic spear which Abaris received from the Hyperborean Sun-god, and which came daily to Phoibus in his exile laden with all good things. It was seen as the lituus of the augur, the crooked staff of the shepherd, the sceptre of the king, and the divining rod which pointed out hidden springs or treasures to modern conjurors. In a form which adhered still more strictly to the first idea the emblem became the stauros or cross of Osiris, and a new source of mythology was thus laid open. To the Egyptians the cross thus became the symbol of immortality, and the god himself was crucified to a tree which denoted his fructifying power. . . . It is peculiar neither to the Egyptians nor Assyrians, neither to Greeks, Latins, Gauls, Germans or Hindus." Mr. Cox includes among its various forms the "trident of Poseidôn or Proteus, and the fylfot or hammer of Thor, which assumes the form of a cross pattée." Increase of wealth by natural fruition evidently lies at the root of many of the myths which relate to hidden treasures, whether buried in the interior of mountains or elsewhere, as well as to the properties of magic purses, festive tables, cornucopiæ, etc.

The following paragraph appeared in the newspapers in March, 1866. It appears, from it, that in the eastern counties the bible has superseded the "wish-rod" as an instrument of divination:—

"Novel Use for the Bible.—At the Norwich assizes, on Wednesday, the case of Creak *v.* Smith was tried. It was an action for slander, the slanderous words imputed to the defendant being as follows:—'You are the thief, and no other man. You have robbed the fatherless and the motherless, and got in at the window. I can prove it by the turn of the Bible.' One of the witnesses for the plaintiff explained what was meant by the expression, 'I'll prove it by the turn of the Bible.' He said that the defendant had told him that a friend of his, having asked him whether he had ever heard anything about the Bible being turned, bade him come to his house and he would show him what it was. That evening, when this person went home, he told his wife what he had said to defendant, and she went through the ceremony, which was done by holding a Bible by a string, twisting

it round, and as it was turning calling out the names of all in the house until she came to the plaintiff's name last of all, when it turned round the other way, showing that he was the guilty man. This ceremony was performed by her a second time by the husband's bedside, with the same triumphant result.—The jury gave a verdict for 20s. damages."

Since most of the above was written I have read the following, in Mr. Robert Hunt's "Trolls, Traditions, and Superstitions of Old Cornwall," which seems to throw a doubt upon the antiquity of the divining rod, *at least as far as Cornish mining is concerned.* The statement, however, in no way invalidates the fact that the hazel, ash, and other trees were held in great veneration from the most remote antiquity either in Cornwall or elsewhere :—

"It may appear strange to many that having dealt with the superstitions of the Cornish people, no mention has been made of the Divining Rod (*the Dowzing Rod*, as it is called), and its use in the discovery of mineral lodes. This has been avoided, in the first place, because any mention of the practice of "*dowzing*" would lead to a discussion, for which this work is not intended; and in the second place, because the use of the hazel-twig is not Cornish. The divining or dowzing rod is certainly not older than the German miners, who were brought over by Queen Elizabeth to teach the Cornish to work the mines, one of whom, called Schutz, was some time Warden of the Stannaries. Indeed there is good reason for believing that the use of this wand is of more recent date, and consequently, removed from the periods which are sought to be illustrated by this collection. The divining rod belongs no more to them than do the modern mysteries of twirling hats, of teaching tables to turn, and—in their wooden way—to talk."

Of course, as Mr. Hunt assigns not the good reason referred to for his statement, it can but be regarded as the expression of an individual opinion. It may, perhaps, be *locally true*, either wholly or in part. However, whatever may be its value, in such matters it is incumbent on the earnest seeker after truth to conceal no apparently incongruous facts or hostile opinions.

The writer of an article on "Stick and Table Turning," published in "All the Year Round," makes the following comments on the manner in which this superstition exhibits itself during the present generation :—

"A good deal of attention was paid by the newspapers to certain alleged achievements of two diviners, or dowsers, about twenty years

ago. They were West of England men, named Adams and Mapstone. A farmer near Wedmore, in Somerset, wishing for a supply of water on his farm, applied to Mapstone. Mapstone used a hazel rod in the usual way, and when he came over a particular spot declared that water would be found fifteen or twenty feet beneath the surface. Digging was therefore commenced at that spot, and water appeared at a depth of nineteen feet. The other expert, Adams, who claimed to have been instrumental in the discovery of nearly a hundred springs in the West of England, went one day by invitation to the house of Mr. Phippen, a surgeon, at Wedmore, to dowse for water. He walked about in the garden behind Mr. Phippen's house until the stick became so agitated that he could not keep it steady; it bent down at a spot which he asserted must have clear water underneath it. Mr. Phippen caused a digging to be made, and water was really found at the spot indicated. As a means of testing Adams's powers in relation to metals, three hats were placed in a row in the kitchen, and three silver spoons under one of the hats. Adams walked among the hats, and his rod told him which of them covered the treasure. Then three kinds of valuables, gold, silver, and jewels, were placed under three hats, one kind under each, and he found out which was which. On one occasion he dowsed for water in the grounds of the Rev. Mr. Foster, of Sodbury, in Gloucestershire. Using the same method as before, he announced the presence of water at a particular spot, twenty feet beneath the surface. A pamphlet published by Mr. Phippen concerning these curious facts attracted the attention of Mr. Marshall, partner in the great flax factory at Leeds. Water was wanted at the mill, and the owners were willing to see whether dowsing could effect anything in the matter. Mr. Marshall invited Adams to come down and search for springs. On one occasion, when blindfolded, Adams failed, but hit the mark pretty nearly in the second attempt, excusing himself for the first failure on the ground that 'he was not used to be blindfolded.' Of the main experiments, Mr. Marshall afterwards said, in a letter to the newspapers, 'I tested Adams by taking him over some deep borings at our manufactory, where he could have no possible guide from anything he could see; and he certainly pointed out nearly the position of the springs, as shown by the produce of the bore-holes, some being much more productive than others. The same was the result at another factory, where Adams could have had no guide from what he saw, and could not have got information otherwise.' "

This superstition has been imported into Australia, where it seems

to flourish with remarkable vigour, notwithstanding the boasted enlightenment and civilization of the race and age. The following paragraph, which appeared in a Melbourne newspaper in the early part of the year 1867, speaks for itself:—

"In the area of Kiora, lying to the southward of Ararat, the settlers, who are very anxious to discover springs of water upon their selections, have engaged the services of an old man, apparently between sixty and seventy years of age, who professes to discover springs by the aid of a divining rod. He has already pointed out two spots where he confidently states water will be found at a moderate depth, and the farmers are now engaged in practically proving his skill. We are told that the diviner holds a slender strip of steel between the finger and thumb of both hands, and walks about the land with it in this position. When water is approached, the rod trembles violently, and the motion ceases as the place is left. One of the settlers, Mr. Tomkins, with the view of testing his accuracy, had the diviner blindfolded (after pointing out the spot where water would be found) and taken to another portion of his land, but he states that the motion of the rod led him, with but little hesitation, back to the same place. The old man refuses to take money for his services till water be obtained, and when proved to exist asks £3 from each individual. He states that the rod was owned by his father, and that it will not indicate water in the hands of any of his brothers. While engaged at Kiora he showed some of the farmers letters which he had received from a number of squatters engaging his services on their stations in a similar capacity; and he left to fulfil these engagements, with a view of returning for payment when the sinking is concluded. He professes to name within three feet of the depth at which water will be obtained, but cannot say if it will prove fresh or salt."

A superstition somewhat akin to that in which the divining rod plays so prominent a part, still lingers in various parts of the country. It is believed that a loaf of wheaten bread, containing a quantity of quicksilver in its centre, will, on being placed in a running stream, rest over the spot where a drowned body lies. The experiment was tried very recently, and an account of it appeared in the newspapers. In this instance, however, the "faithful believers" were grievously disappointed, as the loaf floated past the spot where the body was afterwards discovered.

Another form of this superstition is referred to by Dr. Randal Caldicot, who, evidently, lacked not faith in its efficacy. He says,— "When any Christian is drowned in the river Dee, there will appear

over the water where the corpse is, a light, by which means they do find the body, and it is therefore called the holy Dee."

Aubrey, in his "Miscellanies, quotes a letter addressed to Mr. Baxter, referring to the Welsh "corpse-candle" superstitions, in which the writer *naively* says that the light "doth as much resemble a material candlelight as eggs do eggs."

CHAPTER XIV.

WELL WORSHIP AND SUPERSTITIONS CONNECTED WITH WATER.

I can see the place as it was of yore,
When its crystal riches would ripple and pour
From a fountain channel fresh and dank,
'Mid flowering rush and grassy bank;
When the pale cheek left the city wall,
And the courtier fled the palace hall,
To seek the peaceful shadows that fell
On the waters of the "Holy Well."

. . . .

Some birds came to plume their wing,
And lave their beaks in the healing spring;
And gorgeous butterflies stopp'd to play
About the place on a sultry day.
Folks came from the east and came from the west,
To take at that fountain health and rest;
From the north and the south they came to dwell,
By the far-famed stream of the "Holywell."

Eliza Cook.

Perhaps no ancient superstition has had a more enduring existence than what Mr. Hunt terms "well-worship." This may have arisen, to some extent, from the fact that water, under certain conditions, possesses undoubted "medical virtues." The necessity of personal cleanliness to ensure ordinary comfort, and the value of aqueous agency in its achievement, would doubtless exercise some influence, even in remote times. Add to this the horrors of a "water famine," the intense suffering resulting from prolonged thirst, and we can well imagine that the early tribes of men who worshipped fire would feel a corresponding reverence for what may be termed its natural complement—water. The sun's heat was powerless for good, nay, it was potent for evil, unless in close alliance with the "gentle rain from heaven." From their union springs the warm moisture essential to vegetable growth. Water, too, in more modern times, has been largely employed as a symbol of purity; and, in the Roman Catholic Church, especially, has been consecrated to religious purposes, and rendered "holy." It is, indeed, employed by all Christian sects, in the rite of baptism, as symbolising purity. Hence

it is not surprising that many springs, and especially in the neighbourhood of religious houses, should in the middle ages have been invested with a sacred character, or that superstition of a more ancient and a heathen origin should yet, as it were, haunt their precincts. On this subject Mr. Robert Hunt makes the following eloquent and pertinent observations:—"The purity of the liquid impresses itself, through the eye, upon the mind, and its power of removing all impurity is felt to the soul. 'Wash and be clean,' is the murmuring call of the waters, as they overflow their rocky basins, or grassy vases, and deeply sunk in depravity must that man be who could put to unholy uses one of nature's fountains. The inner life of a well of waters, bursting from its grave in the earth, may be religiously said to form a type of the soul purified by death, rising into a glorified existence and the fulness of light. The tranquil beauty of the rising waters, whispering the softest music, like the healthful breathing of a sleeping infant, sends a feeling of happiness through the soul of the thoughtful observer, and the inner man is purified by its influence, as the outer man is cleansed by ablution."

Many such wells as those in connection with the "Old Friary," at Preston, which gave the name to Ladywell-street, in that borough, like that which performed a similar office for the now notorious "Hollywell street," near the Strand, in London, have passed away, and left nothing behind but the street nomenclature referred to. Others, however, like the St. Mary's well, at the foot of the hill on which the old priory of Penwortham was situated, yet retain, in many minds, not only their reputation for the medical value of their waters, but a vague remnant of reverence and even superstition is still to a large extent associated with them.

A spring in the parish of Brindle, near Preston, has some traditionary associations in connection with it which I am inclined to think date back far into pagan antiquity, nothwithstanding the fact that it has been for centuries named "St. Helen's well." The name has become corrupted by the neighbouring peasantry in a most singular manner. On my first visit to the locality, I inquired of an elderly woman if she could inform me in what direction I should proceed to find *St. Helen's well.* She at first said she had never heard of such a place, but after considerable hesitation she at length exclaimed with some animation, in the dialect of the district, "Oh! it ull be Stelling well yo mean, I'll be bun." A writer under the signature, "Leicestriensis," in vol. 6, p. 152, of "Notes and Queries," speaking of a St. Austin's well, near Leicester says:—"On making

some inquiries, a few years ago, of the 'oldest inhabitant' of the neighbourhood, respecting *St. Augustine's well*, he at first pleaded ignorance of it, but at length, suddenly enlightened, exclaimed, 'Oh! you mean Tosting's well.'" Cakes baked for the lace-makers' feasts in Buckinghamshire, in honour of St. Andrew, their patron saint, are locally termed "Tandry Cakes." These are both curious and instructive specimens of the manner in which names of places and persons undergo changes in their transmission from generation to generation by popular tradition.

St. Helen's well, which is now sadly neglected, is situated about a mile and a half to the south-west of the village of Brindle. Dr. Kuerden, who resided in the neighbourhood, thus refers to it, about two centuries ago:—

"Over against Swansey House, a little towards the hill, standeth an ancient fabric, once the manor house of Brindle, where hath been a chappel belonging to the same, and, a little above it, a spring of very clear water rushing straight upwards into the midst of a fayre fountain, walled square about in stone and flagged in the bottom, very transparent to be seen, and a strong stream issuing out of the same. The fountain is called Saint Ellen's Well, to which place the vulgar neighbouring people of the Red letter do much resort, with pretended devotion, on each year upon St. Ellen's day, where and when out of a foolish ceremony they offer or throw into the well pins, which there being left may be seen a long time after by any visitor to that fountain."

There is a St. Helen's well, near Sefton, in West Lancashire, into which pins were formerly thrown by the credulous, as at Brindle.

The superstitions connected with this "pin dropping" into certain wells are somewhat varied in character. They, however, seem to have generally some relation to divination or fortune-telling, and appear to have found their chief patrons in the fair sex. The well superstitions of this class are widely spread. Dudley Costello tells us that in many parts of Brittany they keep a very watchful eye over the morals of the young women. The fountain of Bobdilis, near Landividian, is famous as an ordeal to test propriety of conduct. The pin which fastens the habit shirt is dropped into the water, and if it touch the bottom with the point downwards the girl is freed from all suspicion; if, on the contrary, it turns the other way and sinks head foremost, her reputation is irretrievably damaged.

The author of "Wanderings in Brittany" informs us that there is a "magic well" of this class at or near Barenton, to which peasants

yet bring their children when ill of fever, having faith in the healing powers of the water. He thus describes the manner in which the deity of the spring is invoked:—"You say 'Ris! Ris! Fontaine de Barenton,' dropping a pin the while into the spring, whereupon it breaks into ripples and bubbles; if it laughs you are to be fortunate; if it remains mute you will be unlucky. Tradition and poetry both say the water fizzes around a sword point, but we had nothing larger than pins to try it with, and to these it responded gaily." He adds that "when the country was in great want of rain, a procession was formed to the fountain, and the priest dipped the foot of the cross, out of the church, into the water, after which rain is sure to fall abundantly. This ceremony has been successful very lately." The same writer refers to another superstition, in connection with the "magic well," which plainly indicates its pagan origin. He says:—"The peasants believe the priests can punish them by sprinkling water from the spring on the large stone, the *Perron of Merlin*, above the well, which brings rain throughout the whole parish for many days."

"Seleucus," in "Notes and Queries," speaks of a well, with a superstition connected with it similar to the one at Brindle, in the Welsh peninsula of Gower. It is called the "Cefyn Bryn or the Holy Well." He says, "it is still supposed to be under the especial patronage of the Virgin Mary, and a crooked pin is the offering of every visitor to its sacred precincts. It is believed that if this pin be dropped in with fervent faith, all the many pins which have ever been thrown into it may be seen rising from the bottom to greet the new one. Argue the impossibility of the thing, and you are told, it is true it never happens *now*, such earnestness of faith being, 'alas!' extinct."

In the same work, vol. 6, p. 28, Robert Rawlinson speaks of a spring near Wooler, in Northumberland, locally known as "*Pin Well*." He says "the country maids, in passing this spring, drop a crooked pin into the water. In Westmorland there is also a *pin well*, into the water of which rich and poor drop a pin in passing. The superstition in both cases consists in the belief that the well is under the charge of a fairy, and that it is necessary to propitiate the little lady by a present of some sort: hence the pin, as most convenient. The crooked pin of Northumberland may be explained upon the received hypothesis in folk-lore, that crooked things are lucky things, as a 'crooked sixpence,' &c."

Mr. Hunt, in his chapter on the "Superstitions of the Wells," gives numerous examples of its prevalence in the remote West of England. The water in the well of St. Ludvan formerly miraculously enlarged

the sense of sight, and loosened the tongue of the true believer; but a demon that the good saint, after a terrible struggle, exorcised from out the body of a child and laid in the Red Sea, in his rage, "by spitting in the water," destroyed its efficacy in these matters. But it is believed still that any child baptised in its waters is certain never to succumb to the genius of Calcraft, and his hempen instrument of death. "On a cord of silk," however, we are informed that "it is stated to have no power." Some years back, notwithstanding, a woman was actually hanged here for the murder of her husband, whom she had poisoned with arsenic in order to clear the way for a more favoured lover. As she was born near the magic well, and was supposed to have been baptised with its waters, the greatest consternation prevailed in the neighbourhood. The much prized fountain had lost its cherished virtue! What was to be done under such a lamentable state of things? The necks of the inhabitants would in future be in equal jeopardy with those of the rest of her Majesty's subjects! It was, however, by some indefatigable enquirer, at last discovered that a mistake had been made; the murderer had not been born in the parish, and consequently had not been baptised with the liquid which flowed from the well of St. Ludwin. Great was the joy of the inhabitants on the receipt of this welcome news. The spring not only recovered its ancient prestige, but became more famous than ever.

The Gulvell Well, in Fosses Moor, answered the demands of lone married women or love-sick spinsters respecting their absent husbands or sweethearts. Mr. Hunt relates how a mother, one Jane Thomas, with her babe in her arms, recently, after a severe mental struggle, obeyed the injunction of an old hag, a "sort of guardian of the well," and tested its efficacy. "She knelt on the mat of bright green grass which grew around, and leaning over the well so as to see her child's face in the water, she repeated after her instructor,

> Water, water, tell me truly,
> Is the man I love duly
> On the earth or under sod,
> Sick or well—in the name of God!

Some minutes passed in perfect silence, and anxiety was rapidly turning cheeks and lips pale, when the colour rapidly returned. There was a gush of clear water from below, bubble rapidly followed bubble, sparkling brightly in the morning sunshine. Full of joy the young mother rose from her knees and exclaimed, 'I am happy now.'" It appears that if the party inquired after should be sick, the water

bubbles, but in a filthy, muddy, condition. If he should be dead, it remains perfectly quiescent, to the dismay of the person seeking information.

There is a singular superstition attached to the well of St. Keyne, "namely, that whichever of a newly-married couple should first drink thereof was to enjoy the sweetness of domestic sovereignity ever after." Referring to this superstition, Mr. Hunt says:—"Once, and once only, have I paid a visit to this sacred spot. Then and there I found a lady drinking of the waters from her thimble, and eagerly contending with her husband that the right to rule was hers. The man, however, mildly insisted upon it that he had the first drink, as he had rushed before his wife, and, dipping his fingers into the waters, had sucked them. This, the lady contended, was not drinking, and she, no doubt, through life had the best of the argument."

There is one well in Cornwall which has long had a reputation for the cure of insanity. Carew, in his "Survey," describes the formula adopted to ensure a successful result:—"The water running from St. Nun's well fell into a square and enclosed walled plat, which might be filled at what depth they listed. Upon this wall was the frantic person put to stand, his back towards the pool, and from thence, with a sudden blow in the breast, tumbled headlong into the pond; where a strong fellow, provided for the nonce, took him and tossed him up and down, alongst and athwart the water, till the patient by foregoing his strength had somewhat forgot his fury. Then was he conveyed to the church, and certain masses said over him; upon which handling, if his right wits returned, St. Nun had the thanks; but if there appeared small amendment, he was bowssened again and again, while there remained in him any hope of life or recovery."

A well on the line of the Roman Wall, near Walltown, in Northumberland, has two distinct traditions attached to it and its neighbourhood! It is locally termed the "King's Well," or "King Arthur's Well." Hutchison says:—"Travellers are shown a well among the cliffs, where it is said Paulinus baptised King Egbert; but it is more probable it was Edwin, king of Northumberland." Dr. Collingwood Bruce says:—"The well has no doubt been a place of historical interest and importance, but unhappily modern drainage is robbing it of its treasures. Another interesting circumstance is connected with this locality. In the crevices of the whin-rock near the house chives grow abundantly. The general opinion is that we are indebted for these plants to the Romans, who were much addicted to the use of

these and kindred vegetables. Most of the early writers refer to this subject; let the reader take a passage from Camden:—'The fabulous tales of the common people concerning this Wall, I doe wittingly and wilfully overpasse. Yet this one thing which I was enformed of by men of good credit, I will not conceale from the reader. There continueth a settled perswasion among a great part of the people there about, and the same received by tradition, that the Roman soldiers of the marches did plant here every where in old time for their use certain medicinable herbs, for to cure wounds; whence it is that some emperic practitioners of chirurgery in Scotland, flock here every year in the beginning of summer, to gather such simples and wound-herbes; the vertue whereof they highly commend as found by long experience, and to be of singular efficacy.'"

Many wells have been famous for the cure of "rickety" children. The mothers generally plunged them *three times into the water*, as they drew them three times through the cleft rowan or ash tree, with a similar object. In my youth I remember being solemnly informed, on bathing for the first time at the cold bath below the Maudlands, on Preston Marsh, that three distinct plunges into the fearfully cold liquid was the orthodox number, especially if medical benefit was the object sought.

The "Maddern or Madron Well, in Cornwall," and another, appear to be the only wells in that district that, like the one in Brindle, properly come under the designation of "*pin wells*." The curative properties of the former were held in very high repute. Bishop Hale, of Exeter, relates, in his "Great Mystery of Godliness," a singular anecdote respecting its presumed miraculous power. Referring to the case of a well-known cripple, he says, "This man, for sixteen years, was forced to walke upon his hands, by reason of the sinews of his leggs were soe contracted that he cold not goe or walke on his feet, who upon monition in a dream to wash in that well, which accordingly he did, was suddenly restored to the use of his limbs; and I sawe him both able to walk and gett his own maintenance. I found here was neither art nor collusion—the cure done, author our invisible God," etc.

In a MS., dated 1777, formerly in the library of Thomas Artle, Esq., and published by Davis Gilbert, F.R.S., in his "Parochial History of Cornwall," there is some curious information respecting this class of superstitions, which throws some light on the practices, formerly of ordinary occurrence, at St. Helen's Well, Brindle. The writer says:—

"In Madron Well—and, I have no doubt, in many others—may

be found frequently the pins which have been dropped by maidens desirous of knowing 'when they were to be married.' I once witnessed the whole ceremony performed by a group of beautiful girls, who had walked on a May morning from Penzance. Two pieces of straw, about an inch long each, were crossed and the pin run through them. This cross was then dropped into the water, and the rising bubbles carefully counted, as they marked the number of years which would pass ere the arrival of the happy day. This practice also prevailed amongst the visitors to the well at the foot of Monacuddle Grove, near St. Austell. On approaching the waters, each visitor is expected to throw in a crooked pin; and, if you are lucky, you may possibly see the other pins rising from the bottom to meet the most recent offering. Rags and votive offerings to the genius of the waters are hung around many of the wells."

We have accounts of similar customs in North Britain and in the Hebrides. J. F. Campbell, in his "Popular Tales of the West Highlands," says:—"Holy healing wells are common all over the Highlands, and people still leave offerings of pins and nails, and bits of rag, though few would confess it. There is a well in Islay, where I myself have, after drinking, deposited copper caps amongst a hoard of pins and buttons, and similar gear, placed in chinks in the rocks and trees at the edge of the 'Witches Well.' There is another well with similar offerings freshly placed beside it, in an island in Loch Meree, in Ross-shire, and many similar wells are to be found in other places in Scotland."

A spring in connection with the ancient abbey at Glastonbury retained its reputation for sanctity and medical virtue until a very recent period. In consequence of some astounding, or, indeed, miraculous cure supposed to have been effected by its agency, immense numbers of invalids flocked to it in the years 1750 and 1751. It is said that, in the month of May, in the latter year, ten thousand persons visited Glastonbury, under the influence of this superstition.

Since the above was written, the following paragraph, from the *Banffshire Journal*, has come under my notice. It demonstrates the retention to the present day not only of the ancient superstition respecting wells, but likewise of some others to which I have referred in previous chapters:—

"A Modern Scotch Witch.—On the 23rd of February, there died at Mill of Ribrae, parish of Forglen, Margaret Grant, at the advanced age of 69 years; and as she represented a class which is regarded as becoming very few in number in the present day, two

or three remarks on the chief features of her character may not be unacceptable. Margaret was superstitious, and fully and firmly believed, up to her dying day, that she possessed power to remove or avert the ills and aliments of both man and beast, especially of the latter; and this by means of various incantations, ceremonies, and appliances—such as fresh cuttings of 'ra'n tree,' some of which she always carried about with her. She would carefully place so many before and so many behind the particular beast she meant to benefit. Another potent charm was what she called 'holy water,' taken, no doubt, from some 'old and fabulous well.' This she also generally carried along with her, and used partly in sprinkling the pathway of the individuals she designed to bless—the rest to be mixed in common water to wash the hands and face. In the case of such as she was desirous should prosper, and be defended from evil, she would go round and round their dwellings, carrying along a rod of her wonder-working 'ra'n tree'—and this was usually done at a very early hour in the morning. She also believed herself to be transmutable, and that she was at times actually changed by evil-disposed persons into a pony or hare, and rode for great distances, or was hunted by dogs, as the case might be. We have heard of several other strange enchantments which Margaret practised when she had opportunity, and was allowed. But in all her foibles there was ever conspicuous the design of doing good."

From this it would appear that Margaret Grant was a witch of the white kind, they having, as I have previously shown, power only for good. The black were potent only for evil, and the grey ones were a combination of the other two.

I have previously referred to the "well-dressings," or the decoration of springs and fountains, yet very common in some counties, and especially in Derbyshire, and suggested that they owe their origin to the Roman Floralia, or to a still older custom, the common Aryan root of both. Crofton Croker speaks of the existence of "well worship" in Ireland; Dr. O'Conner, in his "Travels in Persia," notices its prevalence in the East; and Sir William Betham, in his "Gael and Cymbri," says, "The Celtæ were much addicted to the worship of fountains and rivers as divinities." He adds, "They had a deity called Divona, or the river god." It seems, therefore, very clear that this superstition, in one form or another, is not only widely disseminated, but that its origin may, with safety, be ascribed to a very remote period in the history of humanity.

The deification of rivers and streams appears to have very generally

prevailed amongst the ancients. Young and beautiful women, under the general name of Naiads, in the Greek and Roman mythologies, were believed to preside over brooks, springs, and rivers. Many of the heroic personages described by the early Greek poets are said to be the offspring of nymphs of this class.

Each river was supposed to be under the protection of its presiding deity. Their sources were especially sacred, and religious ceremonies were performed in their immediate vicinity. As at the Clitumnus, so beautifully described by Byron, in "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," temples were erected near the fountains which gave them birth, and small pieces of money were frequently thrown into their crystal streams with the view to the propitiation of the presiding deities. Sacrifices were offered to them, and no bather was allowed to lave his limbs near the source of any consecrated stream, because the contact of the naked body was held to pollute the water. Sir John Lubbock, in his dissertation on the lacustrine dwellings which have recently been discovered in Alpine districts of Europe, as well as in some other localities, has the following pertinent observations on this subject:—

"It has been suggested that the early inhabitants of Switzerland may have worshipped the Lakes, and that the beautiful bracelets, etc., may have been offerings to the gods. In fact, it appears from ancient writers that among the Gauls, Germans, and other nations, many lakes were regarded as sacred. M. Aymard has collected several instances of this kind. According to Cicero, Justin, and Strabo, there was a lake near Toulouse in which the neighbouring tribes used to deposit offerings of gold and silver. Tacitus, Virgil, and Pliny also mention the existence of sacred lakes. Again, so late as the sixth century, Gregory of Tours, who is quoted by M. Troyon and M. Aymard, tells us that on Mount Helanus there was a lake which was the object of popular worship. Every year the inhabitants of the neighbourhood brought to it offerings of clothes, skins, cheeses, cakes, etc. Traces of a similar superstition may still be found lingering in remote parts of Scotland and Ireland; in the former country I have myself seen a sacred spring surrounded by the offerings of the neighbouring peasantry, who seemed to consider pence and half-pence as the most appropriate and agreeable sacrifice to the spirit of the waters."

A correspondent of the *Inverness Courier* states, as recently as last year (1871), that he had recently witnessed a strange instance of the existence of this superstition, "at a loch in the district of Strathnaver, county of Sutherland." The editor says,—

"Dipping in the loch for the purpose of effecting extraordinary cures is stated to be a matter of periodical occurrence, and the 14th appears to have been selected as immediately after the beginning of August in the old style. The hour was between midnight and one o'clock, and the scene, as described by our correspondent, was absurd and disgraceful beyond belief, though not without a touch of weird interest, imparted by the darkness of the night and the superstitious faith of the people. 'The impotent, the halt, the lunatic, and the tender infant were all waiting about midnight for an immersion in Lochmanur. The night was calm, the stars countless, and meteors were occasionally shooting about in all quarters of the heavens above. A streaky white belt could be observed in the remotest part of the firmament. Yet with all this the night was dark—so dark that one could not recognise friend or foe but by close contact and speech. About fifty persons, all told, were present near one spot, and I believe other parts of the loch side were similarly occupied, but I cannot vouch for this—only I heard voices which would lead me so to infer. About twelve stripped and walked into the loch, performing their ablutions three times. Those who were not able to act for themselves were assisted, some of them being led willingly and others by force, for there were cases of each kind. One young woman, strictly guarded, was an object of great pity. She raved in a distressing manner, repeating religious phrases, some of which were very earnest and pathetic. She prayed her guardians not to immerse her, saying that it was not a communion occasion, and asking if they could call this righteousness or faithfulness, or if they could compare the loch and its virtues to the right arm of Christ. These utterances were enough to move any person hearing them. Poor girl! what possible good could immersion do to her? I would have more faith in a shower-bath applied pretty freely and often to the head. No male, so far as I could see, denuded himself for a plunge. Whether this was owing to hesitation regarding the virtues of the water, or whether any of the men were ailing, I could not ascertain. These gatherings take place twice a year, and are known far and near to such as put belief in the spell. But the climax of absurdity is in paying the loch in sterling coin. Forsooth, the cure cannot be effected without money cast into the waters! I may add that the practice of dipping in the loch is said to have been carried on from time immemorial, and it is alleged that many cures have been effected by it.'"

Some pools, streams, or lakes, such as Acheron and Avernus, were associated with the infernal regions, or the nether world, and its

mythical inhabitants. The mother of the monster Grendel, slain by the Anglo-Saxon hero, Beowulf, according to the ancient poem, dwelt in the recesses of a bottomless pool, beneath the dark shadow of a dense wood in the neighbourhood of Hartlepool, on the coast of Durham. The Scottish Kelpie is a kind of "mischievous water spirit said to haunt fords and ferries at night, *especially in storms*."

Burns says in his "Address to the Deil:"—

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin icy-boord,
Then water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction:
An 'nighted travellers are allur'd
To their destruction.
An' aft your moss-traversing spunkies
Decoy the wight that late and drunk is:
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkeys
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er more to rise.

In the same poem Burns refers to the devil himself as an aquatic spirit. He says:—

Ae dreary, *windy*, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin' light,
Wi' you, mysel I got a fright
Ayout the lough;
Ye, like a rash-bush, stood in sight
Wi' waving sough.
The cudgel in my neive did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor quaick-quaick
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squattered, like a drake,
On whistling wings.

Commenting on this poem, Allan Cunningham relates a characteristic anecdote. He says,—"The Prince and Power of the air is a favourite topic of rustic speculation. An old shepherd told me he had, when a boy, as good as seen him. 'I was,' said he, 'returning from school, and I stopped till the twilight groping trouts in a *burn, when a thunder storm came on.* I looked up, and just before me a *cloud* came down as dark as night—the *queerest-shaped cloud* I ever saw; and there was something terrible about it, for when it was close to me, I saw as plain as I see you, a dark form within it, thrice the size of any earthly man. It was the Evil One himself, there's nae doubt o' that. 'Samuel,' I said, 'did you hear his *cloven foot* on the ground?' 'No,' replied he, 'but I saw ane of his *horns*—and O,

what waves o' fire were rowing after him!' The Devil frequently makes his appearance in our old mysteries, but he comes to work unmitigated mischief, and we part with him gladly. The '*Hornie*,' 'Satan,' 'Nick,' or 'Clootie,' who lives in the imaginations of the peasantry, is not quite such a reprobate, though his shape is anything but prepossessing. Nor is he an object of much alarm; a knowledge of the scriptures and a belief in heaven are considered sure protectors; and a peasant will brave a suspicious road at midnight if he can repeat a psalm."

The *horn* and the *cloven foot* in such intimate connection with the descent over the burn of a mysterious dark cloud accompanied by waves of fire, is suggestive of the Aryan thunder and rain clouds and of their attendant lightning god. The peasant's faith in the efficacy of a psalm in overcoming the evil influence is rather corroborative of this, as the superstitious fear for the dethroned gods of the old mythology long survived the introduction of Christianity in the country. It is yet firmly believed in Lancashire that, after going through some mysterious magic formula, and repeating the Lord's prayer *backwards*, that his Satanic majesty will appear in the centre of a circle previously defined. In my youth, "raising the devil," was not considered by the knowing ones to be a particularly arduous task; the getting rid of him, afterwards, was the great difficulty. Some contended that the recital of a certain psalm or other passage from the scriptures was alone efficacious. Others held that holy water was his especial abhorrence, and that the repetition of the Lord's prayer, in its proper order, was essential to success.

I remember well, when very young, being cautioned against approaching to the side of stagnant pools of water partially covered with vegetation. At the time, I firmly believed that, if I disobeyed this instruction, a certain water "boggart" named "Jenny Greenteeth" would drag me beneath her verdant screen and subject me to other tortures besides death by drowning. This superstition is yet very common in Lancashire.

In "Brother Fabian's Manuscript" there is a description of a water-sprite, which appears to be one of the many singular forms which the memory of the dethroned Æsir god, Wodin or Odin, has assumed in the popular imagination:—

> Where, by the marishes, bloometh the bittern,
> Nickar, the soulless one, sits with his ghittern;
> Sits inconsolable, friendless and foeless,
> Waiting his destiny, Nickar the soulless.

Sir Noel Paton, R.S.A., has recently exhibited a picture of this mythic sprite, treated with great æsthetic power and poetic sympathy. The colour, the light and shade, the surrounding accessories, as well as the quaint melancholy features of the "doomed one," and his still quainter frog-like feet, all combine to leave a single harmonious emotional impression. This is further enhanced by the presence of the partially obscured moon and the solitary star, as well as the sedges and other plants, which, with the lonely bittern, (now extinct in Britain) affect marshy places; and by the Batrachian reptile which crawls from the water towards the feet of the "fallen god," who, whilst patiently awaiting his destiny, lulls his senses to sleep with the music of his ghittern, a singularly old-fashioned instrument apparently allied to the modern guitar. This myth is evidently one form of the popular superstition which connected natural phenomena of a peculiar character with the memory of Nickarr (old Nick), or the dethroned Odin of our Teutonic ancestors. Nickarr, it has previously been shown, was one of the appellations pertaining to this deity.

The Scotch Kelpies were supposed to be delighted with the last agonies of drowning men and of mariners in distress. Thomas Landseer, in the notes which accompany his admirable illustrations of Burns' poem, says:—"It is not twenty years since the piercing shrieks and supplications for help, of a passage boat's company, which had been landed on a sandbank at low water, in the Solway Firth, instead of on the Cumberland coast, and who found, as the moon rose and the haze dispersed, that they were in mid-channel, with a strong tide setting fast in upon them, were mistaken by the people, both on the Scotch and English shores, for the wailings of Kelpies! The consequence was that the unhappy people (whose boat had drifted from them before their fatal error was discovered) were drowned; though nothing had been easier, but for the rooted superstition of their neighbours ashore, than to have effectually succoured them."

The same writer makes the following sensible observations respecting the superstitions referred to by Burns. The poet, however, evidently attributed the phenomena to natural causes:—"This propensity to attribute natural effects to supernatural causes is one of the best known and least intelligible phenomena of the human mind. We are always rejecting the evidence of our senses, to tamper with the imaginary evidence supplied by analogous reasoning upon mere abstract principles. The good wife never dreamed of referring her alarms to the natural objects around her. A humming drone, at

twilight by the waters, a rustling in the leaves of the trees about her cottage—if these did not bespeak the presence of the devil, what the d——l else could they indicate? Thus our poet proceeds to tell us that beyond the same loch, he himself had a visible encounter with something LIKE, indeed, to a *bunch of rushes*, waving and shaking in the wind; and after an admirable description of the emotions of fear, by which he was oppressed, he incidentally mentions that the Great Unknown did certainly, with an abrupt and hasty flight, take away like a drake; but even the appropriate note of the fluttering fowl never once awakened his suspicion that it might be the fowl proper and not the foul fiend!"

M. Du Chaillu, in his "Journey to Ashango-land," relates a singular legend, believed in by the natives of Aviia, respecting a series of rapids and a singularly picturesque waterfall which he discovered on the river Ngouyai, and which bears some resemblance to the popular legend about Wayland Smith and to those already referred to. He says:—"Like all other remarkable natural objects, the falls of the Ngouyai, have given rise, in the fertile imaginations of the negroes, to mythical stories. The legend runs that the main falls are the work of the spirit Fougamou, who resides there, and who was *in old times* a mighty forger of iron; but the rapids above are presided over by Nagoshi, the wife of Samba, who has spoiled this part of the river in order to prevent people from ascending and descending. The falls to which the name Samba is given lie a good day's journey below the Fougamou, but, from the description of the natives, I concluded they were only rapids like the Nagoshi above. The Fougemou is the only great fall of water. It takes its name from the spirit (mbuiri) who is said to have made it, and who watches it constantly, wandering night and day round the falls. A legend on this subject was related to us with great animation by our Aviia guide, to the following effect: In former times people used to go to the falls, deposit iron and charcoal on the river side and say, 'Oh! mighty Fougamou, I want this iron to be worked into a knife or hatchet,' (or whatever implement it might be), and, in the morning, when they went to the place, they found the weapon finished. One day, however, a man and his son went with their iron and charcoal, and had the impertinent curiosity to wait and see how it was done. They hid themselves,—the father, in the hollow of a tree, and the son, amongst the boughs of another tree. Fougamou came with his son and began to work, when suddenly the son said, 'Father, I smell the smell of people!' The father replied, 'Of course you smell people, for does not the iron and

charcoal come from the hands of people?' So they worked on. But the son again interrupted his father, repeating the same words, and then Fougamou looked round and saw the two men. He roared with rage, and, to punish the father and son, he turned the tree in which the father was hidden into an ant-hill, and the hiding place of the son into a nest of black ants. Since then Fougamou has not worked iron for the people any more."

In another place, Du Chaillu says,—"I was much amused by the story one of the men related about the dry and wet seasons. The remarkable dryness of the present season had been talked over a good deal, and it was this conversation which led to the story. As usual with the African, the two seasons were personified, *Nchanga*, being the name of the wet, and *Enomo* that of the dry season. One day, the story went, Nchanga and Enomo had a great dispute as to which was the older, and they came at last to lay a wager on the question, which was to be decided in an assembly of the people of the air or sky. Nchanga said, 'When I come to a place rain comes.' Enomo retorted, 'When I make my appearance the rains goes.' The people of the air all listened, and, when the two disputants had ceased, they exclaimed, 'Verily, verily, we cannot tell which is the eldest, you must be both of the same age.'"

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

More strange than true. I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact;
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;
That is the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt;
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination:
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or, in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear.

Shakspere.

In the preceding chapters the chief object I have had in view has been to show that many superstitions and legends yet, or recently, familiar to the people of our northern counties, were, like their congeners in other portions of Europe, descendants from one common parentage. I have dealt almost entirely with that species of folk-lore which I think has been originally communicated *orally* from one generation to another, and not so much with that which may be termed the *literary* fictions of Europe and the East, except in so far as there is good reason to know that the latter are built upon the former. Still Oriental scholars assure us that "many of our best European fictions, as well single stories as whole collections, may be traced from Europe to Arabia, and from Arabia to India, and that the *Indian* form of the story or collection *almost invariably bears the marks of an earlier origin than any other form*, and

appears to be, if not the original form, at least the oldest surviving one."*

Doubtless many other traditionary observances, now nearly obsolete, might be traced to a similar origin to that which I have ascribed to those treated of in this work. Sufficient, however, I believe, has been done to demonstrate the fact that many of them are of much greater antiquity than has generally been supposed. A national religion may be changed in a relatively short period of time, but superstition and tradition, in some form or other, hold their own amongst the populace for ages after their original significance has perished.† Hallam, referring to the religious condition of the Britons at the time of the heptarchy, says "the retention of heathen superstitions was not incompatible, in that age, with a cordial faith" in Christianity.

The late war in Mexico has afforded a striking modern instance of the truth of this proposition. The Christianity of the native Mexican Indians, according to a writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (July, 1867), "is of a very crude and undeveloped kind, and indeed it is very doubtful whether in some parts of the country it has ever really eradicated the old religion. *But it is quite certain that it has not eradicated the old superstitions.* Just as many Pagan feasts in Southern Italy have been converted into Christian feasts by mere change of name, so has the Christianity of the Mexicans been grafted on to their old belief and superstitions, and although they may not quite have believed that the arrival of the Emperor Maximilian was really the

* Penny Cyclop., article Syntipas.—Syntipas is the "title of a collection of stories written in Greek, and bearing the name of Michael Andreopulus, but the collection is evidently translated from an Oriental work. . . Many of the stories of Syntipas are found in an Arabic manuscript of the 'Arabian Nights,' in the British Museum. The whole style of the stories points evidently to an Indian origin." The same may be said of the collection named Pancha Tantra, the original of the Fables of Pilpay, and some other Indian stories."

† Sir John Lubbock, in his "Pre-historic Times," says,—"Nor will tradition supply the place of history. At best it is untrustworthy and short-lived. Thus in 1770 the New Zealanders had no recollection of Tasman's visit. Yet this took place in 1643, less than 130 years before, and must have been to them an event of the greatest possible importance and interest. In the same way the North American Indians soon lost all tradition of De Soto's expedition, although 'by its striking incidents it was so well suited to impress the Indian mind.'" This is no doubt true in relation to many matters which leave behind no religious or superstitious element. When this, however, is superadded, tradition becomes, as Dasent expresses it, remarkable for its toughness, or enduring vitality. Other authorities say, however, that on Cook's arrival, the tradition of Tasman's visit was preserved amongst the natives of the Tonga or Friendly Islands.

fulfilment of the long promised second advent of their ancient god Quetzalcoatle, yet he nevertheless had a white face and a yellow beard, and came from the West in a ship, and was of an illustrious descent, and there is no doubt of the fact that the Mexican Indians received him with open arms, and with a more or less superstitious veneration, looking to him for the regeneration of their country and for a release from the dominion of the Spanish creoles."

The Maories, like several branches of the Aryan race, deified, during life, some of their own warriors. "Watches and white men also were at first regarded as deities; the latter," says Sir John Lubbock, "not perhaps unnaturally, as being armed with thunder and lightning." The Dyaks of Saráwak regard the late Sir James Brooke as a species of deity. After explaining the conditions under which they lived previous to his advent amongst them, and the vast amelioration in the conditions of their existence attendant upon his rule, Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, in his "Malay Archipelago," says,—

"And the unknown stranger who had done all this for them, and asked for nothing in return, what could he be? How was it possible for them to realise his motives? Was it not natural that they should refuse to believe he was a man? for of pure benevolence combined with great power, they had had no experience amongst men. They naturally concluded that he was a superior being, come down upon earth to confer blessings upon the afflicted. In many villages where he had not been seen, I was asked strange questions about him. Was he not as old as the mountains? Could he not bring the dead to life? And they firmly believe that he can give them good harvests, and make their fruit trees bear an abundant crop."

Historians are now pretty generally satisfied, from the combined evidences of philology, ethnology, and tradition, that the bulk of the European nations had a common origin in the East, and that some Asiatic tribes are descendent from the same original stock. I am not, however, insensible to the value of the fact that the early action and thought of all tribes or nations present a certain amount of resemblance, on account of the similar conditions to which each has been subjected. The aborigines of Australia, the South Sea Islands, and America, procured fire by means of an instrument similar to the "chark" of the modern Hindoos and their Aryan ancestors, but they did not give it the same name. The modern Jews, of Semitic origin, sacrifice the common fowl on the eve of the Feast of the Atonement. The belief in the mystical character of chanticleer is equally shared by the Lancashire and Cornish peasant, the Norseman, the Welshman,

the ancient Roman, the modern Hindoo, and some of the North-African tribes. Mr. Lapham, in describing the "Animal Mounds" of Wisconsin, speaks of one carved into the shape of a great serpent, in Adams County. He says,—"Conforming to the curve of the hill, and occupying its very summit, is the serpent, its head resting near the point, and its body winding back for seven hundred feet, in graceful undulations, terminating in a triple coil at the tail. The entire length, if extended, would be not less than one thousand feet. . . . The outline of the work is clearly and boldly defined. . . . The neck of the serpent is stretched out, and slightly curved, and its mouth is opened wide, as if in the act of swallowing or ejecting an oval figure, which rests partially within the distended jaws. This oval is formed by an embankment of earth, without any perceptible opening, four feet in height, and is perfectly regular in outline, its transverse and conjugate diameters being one hundred and sixty, and eighty feet, respectively." This looks, certainly, very like the gigantic Scotch serpent mound, referred to at page 51 of this work, and the huge worm hills of Durham and the North of England. Sir John Lubbock has treated this branch of the subject exhaustively in his recent work on "The Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of man."

The Arabs and other Semitic tribes worshipped the sun as well as the Aryans. The sun and fire worship, likewise, was found to obtain in more than one state on the discovery of South America. Many writers have arrived at the conclusion that "there was communication between the Old World and America in very remote times." Mr. Baldwin (Prehistoric Nations, p. 393) contends that "the antiquities of Mexico and Central America reveal religious symbols, devices, and ideas nearly identical with those found in all countries of the Old World where Cushite communities formerly existed. They show us planet worship with its usual orphic and phallic accompaniments. Humboldt, having traveled in America, and observed remains of these civilizations, was convinced that such communications formerly existed. He found evidence of it in the religious symbols, the architecture, the hieroglyphics, and the social customs made manifest by the ruins, which he was sure came from the other side of the ocean; and, in his view, the date of this communication was older than 'the present division of Asia into Chinese, Mongols, Hindus,' etc. Humboldt did not observe symbols of phallic worship, but the Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg shows that they were described by Spanish writers at the time of the Conquest. He points out that they were prevalent in the

countries of Mexico and Central America, being very abundant at Colhuacan, on the Gulf of California, and at Panuco. Colhuacan was a flourishing city, and the capital of an important kingdom; 'there,' he says, 'phallic institutions had existed from time immemorial.' At Panuco phallic symbols abounded in the temples and on the public monuments. These, with the serpent devices, the sun worship, and the remarkable knowledge of astronomy that existed in connection with them, show a system of religion of which the Abbé is constrained to say: 'Asia appears to have been the cradle of this religion, and of the social institutions which it consecrated.'" The ancient traditions preserved by the inhabitants seem to countenance this view. They speak of a race of "bearded white men who came across the ocean from the East."

A writer in a recent number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* has the following pertinent remarks on this curious and interesting subject:—

"One fact corroborative of the idea that the Old World, or at least some of the inhabitants of Asia, were once aware of the existence of America before its discovery by Columbus, is that many of the Arabian ulema with whom I have conversed on this subject are fully convinced that the ancient Arabian geographers knew of America; and, in support of this opinion, point to passages in old works in which a country to the west of the Atlantic is spoken of. An Arab gentleman, a friend of mine, General Hussein Pasha, in a work he has just written on America, called 'En-Nesser-Et Tayir,' quotes from Djeldeki and other old writers to show this."

This writer favours the view that the Chinese, at a very remote period, became acquainted with the American continent, *via* the Pacific Ocean. Some writers regard the inscription on the celebrated Dighton rock, on the east bank of the Taunton river, as Phœnician. This, however, has been disputed. Others regard it as commemorative of an Indian triumph at some remote period.

Dr. Charles Frederick Winslow, in his recently published work, "Force and Nature," expresses himself strongly in favour of the truth of the presumed ancient communication between the Asian and the American continents. He says:—

"In order to sustain this position, I might, were it admissible, adduce here, as collateral proof, an important and hitherto unpublished fact, of an archæological character, in addition to my geographical and geological observations made upon the coasts and islands of the Pacific Ocean. The fact is this, brought to my knowledge by an unusually extensive practice of my profession, that a

uniform custom of *dorsocision* has existed throughout the Polynesian islands from periods unknown, and beyond all tradition, embracing alike New Zealand, Esther Island, Tahiti, the Marquesas, and Hawaii—a rite wholly different from, but similar in its results to, the Jewish one of circumcision; and that this has been performed at the eighth or ninth year in all of them, and transmitted by father to son, with undeviating precision, from generation to generation. A fact of this character so deeply rooted in the moral, social, and traditional life of many peoples thus widely distributed throughout that vast ocean, so remotely separated from each other, and without intercourse, indicates even more strongly than colour, caste or language, not only the unity of their progenitors, but also the widespread existence of a single race, the vestiges of which were left here and there above the waters when the land sank between America and Asia, and received the older seas into a new basin."

Various hypotheses have been suggested as to the direction in which the flora of the "Old World," and especially of the *miocene* division of the tertiary formations, migrated to America, or *vice versa*. Heer, the celebrated Swiss naturalist, favours the Atlantic route, and regards certain important relations between the fauna of the continents of Europe and America as corroborative, to some extent, at least, of the truth of the statement of the Egyptian priests to Plato, that there, at one time, existed a continent named Atlantis, in the midst of the space now occupied by the Atlantic ocean. Sir Charles Lyell, however, on geological grounds, dissents from this view, and rather inclines to the one propounded by Dr. Asa Gray and Mr. Bentham, that the route of the migration was in the opposite or Pacific direction, "and took a course four times as long across America and the whole of Asia." Lyell says,—"It is the enormous depth and width of the Atlantic which makes us shrink from the hypothesis of a migration of plants, fitted for a sub-tropical climate in the Upper Miocene period, from America to Europe, by a direct course from west to east. Can we not escape from this difficulty by adopting the theory that the forms of vegetation common to recent America and Miocene Europe, first extended from east to west across North America and passed thence by Behring's Straits and the Alentian Islands to Kamtschatka, and thence by land, placed between the 40th and 60th parallels of latitude where the Kurile Islands and Japan are now situated, and thence to China, from which they made their way across Asia to Europe?"

Mr. Consul Plowden, in a report to the Earl of Clarendon, a few

years ago, mentions some Abyssinian superstitions which much resemble others of Aryan origin. Although the Abyssinians are said to be descended from the Semitic* branch of the human family, it must not be forgotten that Christianity has prevailed amongst them from a very early period; and, consequently, sympathetic intercourse must have taken place in the less remote past between them and some of the offshoots of the Aryan stock. Mr. Plowden says,—

"The Abyssinians are superstitious; they believe in the efficacy of amulets; of writings in jargon mixed with Scripture; in the charms of Mussulmans to control the hail and the rain; in spirits of the forest and the river; in omens; in fortune-tellers; and in devils that may be cast out by spells from their human victims, quoting the authority of the New Testament for their belief—to these they attribute epilepsy and other incurable diseases. One absurdity has, however, led to the death of many innocent individuals; all workers in iron, and some others, are supposed to convert themselves into hyenas, and to prey invisibly on their enemies, and many have been slaughtered in this belief. This singular idea, which is universal and tenacious, has its parallel in the 'loup-garou' of France and the 'wehr-wolf' of Germany."

Speaking of the natives of Minahasa, the north-east promontory of the island Celebes, in the Malayan Archipelago, Mr. Russel Wallace, after commending their modern qualities, refers to their original condition when first discovered by Europeans. He says,—

"Their religion was that naturally engendered in the undeveloped human mind by the contemplation of grand natural phenomena and the luxuriance of tropical nature. The burning mountain, the torrent and the lake, were the abode of their deities; and certain trees and birds were supposed to have especial influence over men's actions and destiny. They held wild and exciting festivals to propitiate these deities or demons; and believed that men could be changed by them into animals, either during life or after death."

These superstitions would themselves suggest some remote connection with India; and, singularly enough, Mr. Wallace, in his map of the Malay Archipelago, just includes them within the boundary line which divides the Hindoo-Malayan from the Austro-Malayan region of this district. Indeed, as has been before observed, he shows

* This is denied, however, as we have already seen, by Mr. Baldwin, who traces the ancient Ethiopians, as well as the Egyptians and Phœnicians, from the Cushites of Arabia.

that in the neighbouring island of Bali, the religion of the Brahmins still obtains, and that magnificent ruins of their temples still exist in the island of Java. Therefore it is not improbable some of these now reclaimed savages may be only degenerate descendants from the original Hindoo-Aryan stock.

There is doubtless much force in Hallam's observation that "similarity of laws and customs *may often* be traced to natural causes in the state of society rather than to imitation." Yet the strong tendency of all humanity to imitation of every kind, the "toughness of tradition," and the longevity of superstitious belief, are nevertheless equally powerful agents in the mental development of humanity, and demand the most careful consideration and regard, when the nature and character of progressive civilization, in any age or country, is subjected to philosophical analysis.

It will be seen from the preceding chapters, that many traditions and superstitions appear insensibly to glide into each other. Sometimes two or more seem, as it were, to overlie one another, or to have become indeed even more intimately compounded. With regard to superstitions, this is very apparent in those which relate to witchcraft, werewolves, transformations, the furious host, the spectre huntsman, giants, heroes, tyrant lords, etc. This is paralleled by many traditionary beliefs both general and local. In whatever part of the country stands a ruined castle or abbey or other religious establishment, the nearest peasant or even farmer, will assure an enquirer that it was battered into ruin by Oliver Cromwell! Here the secretary Cromwell, of Henry the Eighth's reign, and the renowned Protector of the following century are evidently amalgamated. Indeed the redoubted Oliver himself seems to have absorbed all the castle-destroying heroes of the national history, Old Time included. The Arthur legends appear to have been constructed upon a somewhat similar principle. At the "pass of the Ribble," near Preston, the site of Cromwell's victory over the Duke of Hamilton, every human skull which is dug up or washed by the swollen river from out of its banks, is believed to pertain to a "Scotch warrior" who fell in that battle. Scottish armies have crossed the pass on several occasions from the days of Athelstan to those of the "Young Pretender," but tradition has fused them nearly all into one.

The sites of ruined churches, abbeys, etc., are believed yet to entomb the ancient edifices, and superstitious people say that, by applying the ear to the earth at midnight, on Christmas eve, they can hear the bells ringing. It is not unlikely, when this practice was a common one, that the sound of some distant bells might occa-

sionally be feebly conducted by the earth, and give countenance to this very universal superstition. The strength of this species of traditionary faith was forcibly illustrated, a few years ago, at the "Maudlands," Preston. Historical records and discovered remains, as well as tradition, marked the locality as the site of a Mediæval Hospital, dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen. A "square mound," evidently an artificial earthwork, was a conspicuous object. Learned antiquaries regarded this as of Roman construction, although no actual remains had been discovered to attest the truth of the conjecture. Popular superstition, however, declared that the mound resulted from the pressure of the steeple of the church of the Hospital, which was entombed beneath it, and that the truth of this could be attested on any Christmas-Eve by the experiment referred to. Doubts being entertained as to the Roman character of the work, some local antiquaries caused excavations to be made in the mound. So prevalent was this superstition, that, on the discovery of a small brick chamber, scores of people eagerly visited the spot, and retired fully convinced they had seen a portion of the steeple of the sunken edifice, and that its discovery demonstrated the truth of the ancient tradition! Singularly enough, in this instance, "antiquarianism" and "folk-lore" proved equally at fault. Remains of pottery, bulbous shaped tobacco pipe bowls, called by the populace both "fairy pipes" and "Cromwell pipes," etc., together with documentary and other evidence, enabled me, in my "History of Preston and its Environs," to demonstrate that the mound in question was the most modern structure then on the ground; that it formed part of the defences of Preston constructed by Colonel Rosworm, after the capture of the town by the Parliamentary troops under Sir John Seaton, in 1643; and that the small brick chamber, in all probability, was the remains of a powder and "match" magazine. However satisfactory this appears to intelligent historical students and general readers, still the sunken church and the Christmas-Eve bell-ringing yet finds favour with some not otherwise ignorant persons. A precisely similar legend is implicitly believed by many in connection with the Roman outwork on Mellor Hill, on the line of ancient road from Manchester to Ribchester.

Ancient castles and monasteries were supposed to have underground means of intercommunication. One tradition of this class, near Preston, presents some remarkable features. In my youth I and the public generally firmly believed that some such work as the celebrated "Thames tunnel" had, ages ago, been constructed beneath the bed of the Ribble and its broad valley, to enable the

monks at Tulketh to communicate with the inmates of the priory on the opposite table land at Penwortham. In the "History of Preston and its Environs," I have endeavoured to sift out the little truth that may underlie this strange tradition. Finding good evidence that each of these promontories had been occupied as outposts or *speculæ* in connection with the Roman station at the "Pass of the Ribble," previously referred to, I have suggested that it is not improbable the results of the rude system of telegraphy then in use would be sufficient to utterly confound the ignorant peasantry of the day, who would be unable to account for the rapid communication of intelligence except by means of a secret underground passage. The monks from Evesham, on the establishment of their "cell" at Penwortham, might, from policy, countenance the tradition of their predecessors, especially in troubled times, on account of the impression of power which such a belief would naturally engender amongst the more ignorant of the population. This way of accounting for the transmission of secret information and even war material is by no means an uncommon one amongst uneducated people in various parts of the world. In Abyssinia, according to Mansfield Parkyns, the people firmly believe that the German missionaries had "in the course of only a few days, perforated a tunnel all the way (from Adowa) to Massowa, on the coast of the Red Sea, a distance of above a hundred and fifty miles, whence they were to obtain large supplies of arms, ammunition, etc."

In the churchyard at Ribchester the remains of a Roman temple dedicated to Minerva have been discovered. Long before this, however, a singular tradition was current respecting it. Leland, King Henry the Eighth's antiquary, after visiting the spot, says :—"Ther is a place wher the people fable that the *Jues* had a Temple." Doubtless the edifice discovered in the early part of the present century was the temple referred to. In the middle period of Christianity in England, the only old, or indeed, different religion to their own, known to the mass of the people, would be the Jewish. Hence the confounding of the Pagan Romans with their Israelitish successors.

The *Athenæum* (Feb. 1868) contained the following paragraph, which affords a marked modern illustration of this tendency to the confusion of various traditions in the popular mind :—

"Samson Mohammedan.—At Miss Heraud's reading of 'Samson Agonistes,' the Rev. Henry Allon, who presided, mentioned a fact illustrative of the way in which tradition deals with ancient legends. As he stood on the site of the Temple of Gaza, two learned Mussul-

mans assured Mr. Allon that Samson was not a Jew but a Mussulman, and that he pulled down the temple, not on the head of the Philistines, but on that of the assembled Christians who had persecuted the Mohammedans."

I have before observed that the European languages referred to are *not asserted to have sprung from the Sanscrit*, but that all, on the contrary, have a common source. The Vedic hymns, however, are the oldest preserved specimens of any of these cognate tongues.* Considerable change must have taken place in the southern Aryan speech before the period when they were written; yet they retain to a great extent, reliable evidence of the common origin of the languages referred to. Max Müller is very explicit on this subject. He says,—

"Even in the Veda, where *dyu* occurs as a masculine, as an active noun, and discloses the same germs of thought which in Greece and Rome grew into the name of the supreme god of the firmament, Dyu, the deity, the lord of heaven, the ancient god of light, never assumes any powerful mythological vitality, never rises to the rank of a supreme deity. In the earlier lists of Vedic deities, Dyu is not included, and the real representative of Jupiter in the Veda is not Dyu, but Indra, a name of Indian growth, and unknown in any other independent branch of Aryan language. *Indra* was another conception of the bright sunny sky, but, partly because its etymological meaning was obscured, partly through the more active poetry and worship of certain Rishis, this name gained a complete ascendancy over that of Dyu, and nearly extinguished the memory in India of one of the earliest, if not *the* earliest, name by which the Aryans endeavoured to express their first conception of the deity. Originally, however, and this is one of the most important discoveries which we owe to the study of the Veda—originally *Dyu* was the bright heavenly deity in India as well as in Greece."

The early mythology of the Aryans, and doubtless of all other savage nations, was more or less a species of, perhaps unconscious, anthropomorphism or a personification of the powers or forces of nature. This is beautifully illustrated by a superstition yet existant among

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* In Chapter I. I have referred to the reported discovery by the French *savan*, M. Lejean, of a spoken language between Kashmir and Affghanistan containing older idioms than Sanscrit, and nearer in affinity to the cognate European tongues. At a recent meeting of the Philological Society, Professor Goldstücker mentioned, as a curious fact, that, in old Sanscrit musical manuscripts, the word *laya* occurs with the same meaning as in French and English. The word *laya* has not yet found its way into any Sanscrit glossary.

the Ojibbeway Indians in North America. North-west of Fort Garry lies the lake Manitobah, which has recently given its name to the new province formed out of the Red River region. This name is derived from the circumstance that a "mysterious voice" is said to be occasionally heard at night in a small island in its midst. The Indians never approach it, believing it to be the home of the Manitobah, or the "Speaking God." The "voice" is said to result, as in the case of Charybdis, from the beating of the waves upon the rocks and shingle of the shore. One writer says:—"Along the northern coast of the island there is a long low cliff of fine grained compact limestone, which, under the stroke of the hammer, clinks like steel. The waves beating on the shore at the foot of the cliff cause the fallen fragments to rub against each other, and to give out a sound resembling the chimes of distant church bells. This phenomenon occurs when the gale blows from the north, and then, as the winds subside, low, wailing sounds, like whispering voices, are heard in the air. Travellers assert that the effect is very impressive, and they have been awakened at night under the impression that they were listening to church bells."*

The kind of personification referred to would, in the case of primæval man, have certainly but a very remote affinity to that conscious artistic personification employed by the cultivated poets and sculptors of after ages. Mr. G. W. Cox, in his "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," presents this distinction in very forcible language. He says,—

"The sun would awaken both mornful and inspiriting ideas, ideas of victory and defeat, of toil and premature death. He would be the Titan, strangling the serpents of the night before he drove his chariot up the sky; and he would also be the being who, worn down by unwilling labour undergone for men, sinks wearied into the arms of

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* How charmingly this is illustrated by the childish faith with which we have all placed large whelk or other univalve shells to the ear, and, after listening with wonder for a time at the musical murmurings there heard, exclaimed that the tide was then flowing landward. Wordsworth refers to this in the following beautiful lines:—

. . . . . I've seen
A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell,
To which, in silence hush'd, his very soul
Listened intently; for murmuring from within
Were heard sonorous cadences, whereby,
To his belief, the monitor expressed
Mysterious union with its native sea.

the mother who bore him in the morning. Other images would not be wanting; the dawn and the dew and the violet clouds would not be less real and living than the sun. In his rising from the east he would quit the fair dawn, whom he should see no more till his labour drew towards its close. And not less would he love and be loved by the dew and by the morning herself, while to both his life would be fatal as his fiery car rose higher in the sky. So would man speak of all other things also; of the thunder and the earthquake and the storm, not less than of summer and of winter. But it would be no personification, and still less would it be an allegory or metaphor. It would be to him a *veritable reality*, which he examined and analysed as little as he reflected on himself. It would be a sentiment and a belief, but in no sense a religion."

In other words, primæval savages did not work artistically, but simply observed, thought, and expressed themselves in the only manner in which they were able.

Kelly describes the usual course of a myth as "beginning in a figurative explanation of meteoric facts, it next became a hieratic mystery, and then descended from the domain of religion to that of magic and popular story."

I have previously observed that the word "Edda," the title of the work which records the wild mythical cosmogany of the Scandinavian race, (a mixture of oriental and northern legend), means "Mother of Poetry." Language itself is largely made up of figures of speech, or as Jean Paul Richter says it is a "dictionary of faded metaphors," the original meaning of which is fully understood but by the philologist. It is not surprising, therefore, that the unknown should, under certain conditions, be figuratively described by means of the known, or that personifications of this class eventuated in the belief in absolute personal existences, in the minds of doubtless well-meaning, but, nevertheless, ignorant men. A few verses from H. H. Wilson's translation of the Vedic hymns will show the nature of this personification:—

"Dyaus (Sky) father, and Prithivi (Earth) kind mother,* Agni (Fire) brother, ye Vasus (Bright ones) have mercy on us."

. . . . . .

"How long is it that the dawns have risen? How long will they rise?

* May not this Prithivi be the forerunner of the Greek Demeter and the Roman Ceres, as well as of the harvest queen, or "kern-baby," and the "mell-doll" of the autumnal festivals of the North of England?

"Those mortals who beheld the pristine Ushas dawning have passed away: to us she is now visible, and they approach who will behold her in after times.

"Ushas, endowed with truth, who art the sister of Bhava, the sister of Varuna, be thou hymned first of the gods.

"Unimpeding divine rites, although wearing away the ages of mankind, the dawn shines the likeness of the mornings that have passed, or that are to be for ever, the first of those that are to come.

"She shines upon us like a young wife, rousing every living being to go to his work. The fire had to be kindled by men: she brought light by striking down darkness.

"She rose up, spreading far and wide, and moving towards every one she grew in brightness, wearing her brilliant garment. The mother of the cows, the leader of the dogs, she shone gold-coloured, lovely to behold.

"She, the fortunate, who brings the eye of the god, who leads the white and lovely steed (of the sun), the Dawn was seen revealed by her rays, with brilliant treasures she follows every one.

"Thou, who art a blessing when thou art near, drive far away the unfriendly; make the pastures wide, give us safety. Remove the haters, bring treasures. Raise up wealth to the worshipper, thou mighty Dawn.

"Shine for us with thy best rays, thou bright Dawn, thou who lengthenest our life, thou the love of all, who givest us wealth in cows, horses, and chariots."

Max Müller thus further illustrates the process of the transition referred to:—

"To us it is clear that the story of Zeus descending as a golden rain into the prison of Danaë was meant for the bright sky delivering the earth from the bonds of winter, and awaking in her a new life by the golden showers of spring. Many of the stories that are told about the love of Zeus for human and half human heroines have a similar origin.* The idea which we express by the phrase, "King

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* How beautifully and how truly has Eliza Cook expressed this sentiment, without any reference to, or even knowledge of, the philologist's interpretation of the Grecian or Aryan myth, in one stanza, in her poem entitled "A Thing of Beauty is a Joy for ever":—

Oh! "beautiful for ever" is the sheen
Of April's sun, that, with a bridegroom's smile,
Nestles in nature's breast of balmy green;
With larks to sing a marriage song, the while

by the grace of God," was expressed in ancient language by calling Kings the descendants of Zeus. This simple and natural conception gave rise to innumerable local legends. Great families and whole tribes claimed Zeus for their ancestor; and as it was necessary in each case to supply him with a wife, the name of the country was naturally chosen to supply the wanting link in these sacred genealogies. Thus *Æacus*, the famous king of Ægina, was fabled to be the offspring of Zeus. This need not have meant more than that he was a powerful, wise, and just king. But it soon came to mean more. Æacus was fabled to have been really the son of Zeus, and Zeus is represented as carrying off Ægina and making her the mother of Æacus. . . . . It is said that Zeus in the form of a bull carried off *Europâ*. This means no more if we translate it back into Sanscrit, than that the strong rising sun (Vrishan) carries off the wide-shining dawn. This story is alluded to again and again in the Veda. Now *Minos*, the ancient King of Crete, required parents; so Zeus and Europa were assigned to him."

The fabled ravishment of Leda by Jupiter in the form of a swan is capable of a like interpretation. Light clouds were called swans, and Mr. Cox regards a white mist, in this instance, to form an equivalent to the golden shower of the Danaê legend.

In like manner the myth which fabled that Œdipus married his mother after murdering his father, is divested of its revolting features. It is held to imply no more than that the sun destroys the darkness and sinks at evening into the twilight from whence he sprung.

Max Müller, in his "History of Sanscrit Literature," points out that similar meanings clearly underlie the Vedic myths. He says:

"It is fabled that Prajâpati, the Lord of Creation, did violence to his daughter. But what does it mean? Prajâpati, the Lord of Creation, is the name of the sun; and he is called so because he protects all creatures. His daughter Ushas is the dawn. And when it is said that he was in love with her, this only means that, at sunrise, the sun runs after the dawn, the dawn being at the same time called the daughter of the sun, because she rises when he approaches. In the same manner it was said that Indra was the seducer of Ahalyâ, this does not imply that the god Indra committed such a crime; but Indra means the sun, and Ahalyâ the night;

The "bridal of the earth and sky" is seen
Before the priest that bars all greed and guile;
With blissful promise there shall soon be born
Fair offspring in red grapes and yellow corn.

and as the night is seduced and ruined by the sun of the morning, therefore is Indra called the paramour of Ahalyâ."

This throws a new and satisfactory light upon what has long been regarded as a serious blot upon the morals of the ancient Greeks, as exhibited by the conduct of the most exalted of the deities which figure in their picturesque and poetic, but certainly not very decorous, mythological theogony.

Mr. Ruskin, in his lecture on "Light," delivered at Oxford recently, gives several excellent examples of Greek personifications of this class. He concludes as follows:—

"Then join with these the Northern legends connected with the air. It does not matter whether you take Dorus as the son of Apollo or the son of Helen; he equally symbolizes the power of light; while his brother Æolus, through all his descendants, chiefly in Sisyphus, is confused or associated with the real god of the winds, and represents to you the power of the air. And then, as this conception enters into art, you have the myths of Dædalus, the flight of Icarus, and the story of Phrixus and Helle, giving you continual associations of the physical air and light, ending with the power of Athena over Corinth as well as over Athens. Now, once having the clue, you can work out the sequels for yourselves better than I can for you; and you will soon find even the earliest or slightest grotesques of Greek art become full of interest to you. For nothing is more wonderful than the depth of meaning which nations in their first days of thought, like children, can attach to the rudest symbols; and what to us is grotesque or ugly, like a little child's doll, can speak to them the loveliest things."

We have already seen, in Chapter X., that Lord Bacon regarded the great mass of the Greek myths as allegories. Another ingenious mode of interpreting the artistically beautiful mythology of the Greeks is eloquently expressed by Wordsworth, in his poem, "The Excursion":—

> In that fair clime, the lonely Herdsman, stretched
> On the soft grass through half a summer day,
> With music lulled his indolent repose;
> And, in some fit of weariness, if he,
> When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear
> A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
> Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetched
> Even from the blazing chariot of the Sun
> A beardless youth who touched a golden lute,
> And filled the illumined groves with ravishment.
> The mighty Hunter, lifting up his eyes
> Towards the crescent Moon, with grateful heart

Called on the lovely Wanderer who bestowed
That timely light to share his joyous sport.
And hence a beaming Goddess with her nymphs
Across the lawn and through the darksome grove
(Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes
By echo multiplied from rock or cave)
Swept in the storm of chase, as moon and stars
Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven
When winds are blowing strong. The traveller slaked
His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thanked
The Naiad. Sunbeams upon distant hills
Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly.
The Zephyrs, fanning, as they passed, their wings,
Lacked not for love fair objects whom they wooed
With gentle whisper. Withered boughs grotesque,
Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
In the low vale, or on steep mountain side;
And sometimes intermixed with stirring horns
Of the live deer, or goat's depending beard;
These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood
Of gamesome deities; or Pan himself,
The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring god.

This figurative or poetical element in the classical mythology would, doubtless, be understood by the more cultured sections of the ancient populations of the later period, at least to a certain extent. For instance; Ovid distinctly states that under the name Vesta direct reference is made to fire. Socrates, too, understood nothing more than the north wind in the name Boreas. I have previously referred to the statement of Diodorus Siculus, that although the mythographers spoke of Prometheus stealing fire from heaven, they merely intended to imply that he was the inventor of the "chark," or fire-producing instrument. Some, if not all, of the earlier Greek writers, however, including Homer and Hesiod, appear, like the mass of the populace, to have treated their mythic personages as actual concrete beings.

Farrer, in his "Origin of Language," forcibly illustrates the figurative character of much of our ordinary every-day speech. He says,—"The continual metaphors by which we compare our thoughts and emotions to the changes of the outer world—sadness to a cloudy sky, calm to the silvery rays of the moonlight, anger to waves agitated by the wind—are not, as Schelling observed, a mere play of the imagination, but are an expression, in two different languages, of the same thought of the Creator, and one serves to interpret the other. 'Nature is visible spirit, spirit invisible nature.'"

Shakspere is supposed to have founded some portions of his Tempest on a narrative of the shipwreck of Sir John Somers on one of the Bermuda islands. These islands were then uninhabited by man, and generally believed to be "enchanted." Old Stowe, in his "Annals," speaking of this shipwreck, among other things, says these islands "were, of all nations, said and supposed to be enchanted and inhabited with witches and devills, which grow by reason of accustomed monstrous thunder, storms, and tempests." One of Shakspere's commentators, referring to this passage, says,—"This account by old Stowe of the elemental growth and generation of the hags and imps and devils and abortions of the island, is fearfully fine. Caliban and Sycorax and Setebos, might well be imagined to have first glared into life through the long fermenting incantation of 'accustomed monstrous thunder.'" Ruskin says "the whole play of the Tempest is an allegorical representation of the powers of true, and, therefore, spiritual, liberty, as opposed to true, and, therefore, carnal and brutal, slavery. There is not a sentence nor a rhyme sung or uttered by Ariel or Caliban throughout the play which has not this under meaning."

Herbert Spencer has truly said, "We too often forget that not only is there 'a soul of goodness in things evil,' but very generally also, a soul of truth in things erroneous."

Thus, these despised and contemned traditionary superstitions of our progenitors are found, nevertheless, to enshrine much valuable material, by a careful study of which we may obtain a deeper insight into some of the more subtle or hidden features of the human soul, the nature and progress of man's intellectual growth, of the origin and development of language as a medium of mental intercommunion, and of the true natural basis on which rest some of the greatest triumphs of plastic and poetic art that have astonished, delighted, and instructed mankind for countless generations.

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